

# THE Bushwalker

Magazine of the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs (NSW) Inc  
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<http://www.bushwalking.org.au>



## ABORIGINAL OWNERSHIP OF NATIONAL PARKS IN NSW

Vivien Dunne \*

Communication Committee

The National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Aboriginal Ownership) Act 1996\*\* relating to Aboriginal Ownership of National Parks passed through both houses of the NSW Parliament unopposed in December 1996. For some more conservative members of the community the passing of The Act was seen as cause for concern and greeted with alarm, but for others it was heralded as a significant step in providing for the rights of Australia's indigenous peoples.

Joint management will be established for parks and reserves listed on Schedule 14 through the appointment of Boards of Management. The Boards will be required to exercise management, care and control in accordance with the provisions of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 and at this stage five parks have been listed for return to Aboriginal ownership.

• Mootwingee NP and Historic Site, and Coturaundee Nature Reserve near Broken Hill

• Mungo NP



Human remains estimated to date back 25,500 years found in Mungo National park - Photo courtesy Webster Publishing.

- NSW Jervis Bay NP near Nowra
- Mount Yarowlyck Nature Reserve near Armidale
- Mount Grenfell Historic Site near Cobar

The most important points to note in The Amendment are as follows:-

National Parks will be approved for Aboriginal ownership subject to a lease-back arrangement between the indigenous owners and the relevant State or Commonwealth authority and will include the payment of rent for the lease of the land. The term of the lease will be for a period of 30 years with allowance made for renewal of the term, periodic review and provision for replacement.

Public right of access to national parks and the use and enjoyment of the parks is to be guaranteed.

The lands will be protected from being sold or mortgaged.

Direct operational responsibility for the management of the land will continue to rest with NPWS, and compliance with existing Acts, World Heritage listings, or other international treaty obligations will be acknowledged and upheld.

Aboriginal people will be given preference for employment opportunities as administrators, rangers and for other positions within national parks.

Admission fees will be charged for entrance to national parks for tourists.

Policies will be adopted giving access to the Aboriginal owners for subsistence hunting, fishing and cultural use of the land, together with access for ceremonial purposes.

It should be noted that The

Amendments to the 1996 Aboriginal Ownership Act provide for the recognition of indigenous peoples rights to ancestral lands, cultural sites and places of historical significance as well as recognising the need for the protection and management of national parks for all Australians.

*\* Vivien Dunne is a student of Environmental Geography at the University of Sydney and Vice President of the Sydney Branch of the National Parks Association of NSW. The article reflects only the authors opinion and not those of the NPA.*

*\*\* All information from NPWS, Aboriginal Ownership of National Parks, Government Publication, February 1997*

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## 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 text file on three and a half inch floppy disk in IBM format or E-Mail.

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The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW Inc represents approximately 65 clubs with a total membership around 8500 bushwalkers. Formed in 1932, the Confederation provides a united voice on conservation and other issues, runs training courses for members, and provides for the public a free wilderness search and rescue service. People interested in joining a bushwalking club are invited to write to the Secretary Bushwalkers NSW at the above address for information on clubs in their area. Or web site <http://www.bushwalking.org.au>

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## THE BUSHWALKER

is the magazine of the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW Inc. It's published quarterly. The aim of the magazine is to provide articles and information of interest to the members of clubs affiliated with the Confederation and bushwalkers generally. Any opinions expressed by individual authors do not always represent the official views of the Confederation.

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## BLUE MOUNTAINS FOR WORLD HERITAGE GROUNDS FOR OPTIMISM

Announcements in late October have given cause for optimism that progress is being made with the World Heritage Nomination for the Blue Mountains.

The nomination of the Blue Mountains as a World Heritage area has been an issue for the best part of ten years. The cause has been strongly promoted by the Colong Foundation, whose campaign could be said to have been launched by the publication of Geoff Mosley's book "Blue Mountains for World Heritage" in 1989.

Supporters of the World Heritage Nomination see environmental and economic benefits flowing from the activity. Additional funding would be expected to result in improved planning and management of the area. Environmentally damaging activity could be kept out, using Commonwealth legislation which exists to prevent State Governments allowing undesirable and/or incompatible activities in a World Heritage Area. Additional tourists could be expected to boost the local economy. Nomination detractors see this additional traffic as having possible "over-use" implications, including additional pressure for eco-tourism developments inside National Parks.

There was widespread community interest in the World Heritage Nomination in the early nineties, when there was the expectation that something was

*Les Coyne Blue Mountains  
Conservation Society\**

about to happen. When there was no action, the matter faded from public view. Today, most have forgotten that the nomination process had ever been instigated. At the last state election, World Heritage for the Blue Mountains was briefly in the news, gaining a commitment from both the major parties that they would progress the matter if they came back into Government.

The nomination has been the subject of two further reports, with another one currently being prepared. A major study was completed by the National Herbarium in 1994. A review of the National Herbarium report by a Panel of Experts (Ms S Sullivan, Prof. Ollier and Prof. J Kirkpatrick) was performed 1996. The first report exceeds 500 pages. The second report comprises a two or three page summary of discussion with each individual member of the panel.

The first report supported Geoff Mosley and the Colong Foundation, and appeared to strengthen their case. The second report cast doubt on the viability of a nomination based on geomorphological values. Instead, members of the Expert Panel suggested that a nomination based on a number of diverse themes – e.g. Eucalyptus diversity and Aboriginal culture – could be expected to succeed. The third review, carried out as part of the Comprehensive

Regional Assessment Process is not yet available, but is understood to support the widespread presence of World Heritage values in the area.

Earlier this year, State and Federal Environment Ministers Pam Allan and Robert Hill reaffirmed their respective government's commitment to the preparation of a nomination, with a target completion date of June 1998. Submission of the nomination was conditional on its being of sufficient quality to ensure success. If submitted on 1 July 1998, the outcome from the nomination would not be known until December 1999, at earliest.

Also announced in early 1997 was the formation of a Reference Committee, to act as a link between government, the community and stakeholders, to act as a forum for discussion on progress, and to provide an opportunity for public input to the project. The Reference Committee comprises Geoff Mosley, representatives from community environment groups, NSW Minerals Council, tourism groups, Aboriginal interests and local Government. The Reference Committee has met three times, with the most recent meeting taking place on 24 October 1997. Tourism interests have, so far, been conspicuously absent from the meetings. The Confederation, also invited to attend, has been unrepresented. The Reference Committee is being convened by NPWS,  
**Continued on page 11**



A well known point in the Blue Mountains Mt Solitary - Photo Colin Wood

## THE DAM ISSUE REMAINS WITH US

**For over 4 years now, some committed bushwalkers and conservationists have campaigned to protect the wilderness and wild rivers of the southern Blue Mountains from periodic inundation, resulting from a proposed raising of Warragamba Dam for flood mitigation.**

Our major success to date has been the change in Government policy from the proposed 23 metre dam raising favoured by the Fahey Government, to the side spillway preferred option of the Carr Government. The side spillway does not increase the storage capacity of the dam but does address essential dam safety upgrade requirements and is fully supported by our campaign. It is of great importance however that the spillway is commenced on time. If it remains unresolved much longer it will likely become an election issue for the Government, due to a local council and media campaign in the Hawkesbury area to have the dam raised. The NSW opposition have remained in favour of their former proposal, making it vital that the spillway is commenced in the term of this Government.

An environmental impact statement (EIS) for the spillway was

*by John Macris Conservation officer*

exhibited from last November to February and the great majority of public submissions were in support. We thank bushwalkers who took the time to make a submission in support of our cause. With the passing of several months since this exhibition and little Government action evident, the Kowmung Committee has been attempting to keep track of the progress of Ministerial approval and public tendering for the side spillway.

Since the closure of the submission period for the EIS of the spillway in February we have been waiting on several bureaucratic processes to be completed before Minister Knowles could give his final approval. These were firstly Sydney Water's representations report, which is a summary of all submissions to the EIS. This report was due to go to the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP) by late September. DUAP assesses this report and the EIS and their Director General reports to Minister Craig Knowles, who then seeks Cabinet endorsement before signing off on the project.

The proposed commencement date of early 1998 is still achievable if

Minister Knowles takes an active interest in progressing these reports. As an example, anyone who observed the recent EIS process for Sydney's parkland consuming Eastern Distributor motorway project, would have noticed that all of those departmental reporting processes can in fact be finished in a matter of weeks rather than the 7 months taken so far with the spillway proposal.

We ask you to write to Craig Knowles, requesting that he approve the spillway immediately so as to ensure Warragamba Dam is safeguarded and the Carr Government's commitment of no increase to the storage capacity of the dam is honoured. Write to Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning

Level 33 Governor Macquarie  
Tower 1 Farrar Place Sydney NSW 2000



*The Kowmung in spring - photo courtesy Webster Publishing*

2 quarter page adds together same  
as last time.  
wild sports and another



## **MANAGEMENT OF NATIONAL PARKS BY ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCILS**

**The New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council NSWALC welcomed the enactment of the National Parks and Wildlife Aboriginal ownership Act 1996 NSW.**

The Act creates a new category of conservation reserve in NSW National Parks on land owned by Aboriginal people which is leased to the Crown and managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service NPWS.

The rights of the public in Aboriginal owned National Parks will be the same as in other National Parks in NSW while the rights of Aboriginal Owners are recognized through ownership and management arrangements. This ensures that the objectives of conservation and public recreation such as camping, walking, sight-seeing and picnicking are as important in Aboriginal owned National Parks as in other National Parks.

Aboriginal owned National Parks are to be managed by NPWS, but the Plan of Management is created by the Board of Management for the

*Sean Docker  
Land Rights Unit  
NSWALC*

particular Aboriginal owned park and not the Director General of NPWS, as is the case in other National Parks.

The Board of Management consists of a majority of Aboriginal Owners and includes representatives of Local Government, NPWS, a conservation representative, a representative of adjoining land holders and a representative of the Aboriginal Land Council. The Aboriginal Owners of the National Parks, and other Aboriginal people they give permission, may hunt and gather fauna and flora with the exception of species protected by threatened species legislation or by the Plan of Management. The leases must acknowledge the rights of the public under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. The Aboriginal Land Council may not sell, mortgage, exchange or dispose of the land.

There are two methods by which new Aboriginal owned National Parks can be created.

Firstly, where Crown land is claimed by an Aboriginal Land Council under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 11VSR3 and is found to also be needed for the essential public purpose of Nature Conservation the land may become an Aboriginal owned National Park. This will involve addition to the National Park Estate.

Secondly, where land is already a National Park it can become an Aboriginal owned National Park by being placed on Schedule 14 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act. The process for this requires an application being made by any person to the Director General of NPWS, the Director General making a report to the Minister, the Minister making a recommendation that the area be added to Schedule 14, as long as it is at least as significant to Aboriginal people as the other lands on Schedule 14, and an Act of Parliament being passed.

Aboriginal owned National Parks provide a valuable opportunity for the public to enjoy the usual benefits of land being a National Park as well as the

special benefits of Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal input into the management of the lands. For their part some Aboriginal people can have their traditional ownership of their land formally acknowledged as well as have the opportunity to have input into the management of those lands.



*Goanna - Photo Colin Wood*

**Book Review**

# **BACK FROM THE BRINK: BLUE GUM FOREST AND THE GROSE WILDERNESS**

by Andy Macqueen 39 Bee Farm Rd  
Springwood, N.S.W.: Andy MacQueen, 1997  
320p ISBN: 0646319019 \$29 inc postage

In his book "Back from the Brink" Andy Macqueen writes in a masterly fashion of the numerous forms of recreation through which decades of enjoyment have been elicited from Blue Gum Forest in particular, and the whole Grose Wilderness in general. There is obvious evidence of scores of hours of dedicated research involved in the writing of this, his second book, and you will be fascinated by the maps and photos which show heroic efforts in eras before our own. You will be inspired by the stories from the pages of history, drawn together for the first time in this all-encompassing work. Especially relevant is the chapter on bushwalking heydays. The superb historical photographs are very clear and Andy has used many quotes from original journal entries.

This book is the most detailed yet published on the history of a place well known and loved by generations of bushwalkers. Blue Gum Forest is the true "Cradle of Conservation". Andy brings the Grose Wilderness to life by unearthing the schemes, dreams and realities which have impacted on the area from the earliest days of the colony, to its being "saved from the axe" despite attempts to build roads, railways, dams, mines and forestry, up to the present day. The book tells the story, in an engaging way, of the history and salvation and of the people who have visited this special wilderness: aborigines, explorers, miners, engineers, track builders, bushwalkers, canyons, climbers and countless others - those who have loved it and those who have threatened its continued existence.

I was entranced from the moment I opened this book, as it allowed me to relive history, especially appropriate as a lead up to the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of Blue Gum Forest, which was held on 5 & 6 September 1997 at Blackheath and in the Forest, a weekend which afforded me only my second visit to Blue Gum. Andy is well qualified to write such a book, having been a visitor to the area for over 30 years and having retraced many of the original journeys made by explorers in the Grose area.

To add to the fascination Andy has added a glossary of place names, an extensive index, supplementary maps, and enlightening notes and references, though as he states in his



*Mr Debus MP Andy macqueen and NPWS officer Greg Welham at Andy's book launch at Govett's Leap*

warning notice - this is not a guidebook.

Bushwalkers would also be interested to read Andy's previous book: "Blue Mountains to Bridgetown: the life and journeys of Barrallier, 1773 - 1853", also available from Andy 39 Bee Farm Rs Springwood

**Reviewed by Thais Turner, President, Bankstown Bushwalking Club Inc., 1997.**

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## **Back from the Brink — Blue Gum Forest and the Grose Wilderness. Andy Macqueen, 320 pages, self published**

As stated in the disclaimer, this is not a guide book. Indeed, its combination of history, geography, folklore, and the author's evident feel for the country, make it a far more complete work than any superficial guide to well-worn tourist pleasure spots. As well as charting the geography of the Grose River and surrounds, — from ancient geology to today's landforms — the book takes an interesting look at the ways our perception of the Grose river has changed — from a resource waiting to be exploited, to a place of such incalculable intrinsic value that value that it should be preserved as a wilderness areas.

Centerpiece of the book — both geographically and thematically — is the preservation of the Blue Gum Forest, nicely coinciding with the 65th anniversary of the formation of the first Blue Gum Forest reserve in September 1932. And, as Macqueen points out, whether the immediate threats facing the forest them were real or imagined, we owe the members of the Blue Gum Committee a debt of gratitude for saving the forest.

"No other event served so well to focus the energy of bushwalkers and other conservationists . No other provided so much inspiration and impetus." (pg257) Not only did the activists of 1932 preserve a place that has become the spiritual home for many bushwalkers, they raised the profile of wilderness conservation and established momentum for the preservation of other wilderness areas. And, importantly, they paid a role in getting society to realise the intrinsic value of areas such as the Grose — rather than just seeing in them the potential for development. We can see the continuation of the 1930's campaign today, in the Confederation of Bushwalking Club's 1995 proposal of a 60,000 hectares Gross Wilderness Area. As the book's title "Back from the Brink" suggests, the Grose has been subjected to more than threat since Europeans first began exploring the area. The section of the book called "Schemes" provides an entertaining, if not occasionally scary, look at some of the ways developers have looked to the Grose for profit and progress. The river has been under threat from several astonishing, hare-brained schemes to build railway lines up its banks, dams for water storage and a hydro electric scheme, numerous small oil shale and coal prospects, and on a smaller scale, timber getters and cattle grazers. Its also interesting to see the contrast between some 19th century appreciation of the romantic aesthetics of the Gross Valley wilderness, and a conflicting desire to see the land "turn a buck". A lot of the books appeal comes from the obvious knowledge the author has of the area. Indeed, Macqueen is no stranger to the Grose, having been on about 100 walks to the Grose and surrounds. And, even a dip into the book's pages might inspire you to visit the places described, and recreate some of the famous journeys of bushwalkers of old — Max Gentle, Gordon Smith and Dot Butler — that are detailed in its pages.

Lyndall Pickering

**Andy's book is available from most gear shops and from Andy 39 Bee Farm Rd Springwood. \$29 inc postage**

## BACK TO THE BLUE GUM CIRCA 1932

by Allison Cadzow

**If you thought that bushwalking history and Star Trek had little in common you might think again.** At the 65th anniversary of Blue Gum celebrations we were ushered into a transporter room, aka the NPWS auditorium, and time-warped back by Captain Andy Macqueen to a 1932 meeting of the Hikers Club, complete with a lively lantern slide presentation on saving the Blue Gum Forest.

Firstly though, there were agenda matters that needed attention. According to deeply offended members of the public, women club members had indulged in “unseemly behaviour” by wearing shorts. Female club members were requested to carry a change of proper clothes to wear in public so all would be right in the civilised world. We were also informed of Paddy Palins new range of tents made with a wonderful modern fabric called Japara,

Miles Dunphy was asked to speak about his latest baby, the Primitive Areas Scheme (and as asked to keep it brief!). After this lights were dimmed and a relative hush descended the presenter explained the campaign to save the Blue Gum Forest. Most of the pictures shown were taken by accomplished walker-photographer Alan Rigby and was most persuasive. We were shown slides of various camps amid the towering blue

gums and cliffs used for promotion in the newspapers and Myles Dunphy’s map of the area. Myles had reputedly found a “most adventurous route” down the steep Perry’s Lookdown.

We were then told of the chance meeting in Blue Gum between Hungerford, a would be walnut farmer,

of rubbish were mentioned. One agitated member claimed that Scouts were probably to blame and needed to learn to “burn, bash and bury”. A tale was told of a man called Sandy who had shot himself in the foot while in Blue Gum, which had the crowd laughing (beware no sympathy available here!). Fundraising efforts such as the book



*The Grose Wilderness and The Blue Gum Forest from Govett’s Leap*

and lessee of the Blue Gum land, and bushwalkers. A series of negotiations had then taken place stalling Hungerford’s plans so the lease to the forest could be purchased and. Dark rumours about this amounting to a “hoodwinking” of walkers had circulated amid some Sydney Bushwalkers. The need for protection of the forest and the presence

‘Bushwalks and Byways’ were mentioned as well as a Blue Gum Ball, the hall for which was tastefully (?) decorated with stuffed animals and Aboriginal artifacts borrowed from the museum.

A treat of the meeting were the rousing recitations of Tare’s “Blue Gum Song”, the sentiment of which, if not the expression, was applauded. A fuss about the name of the forest followed, while others were already dreaming about visiting this magic place.

With lights back on, we returned to 1997. With hindsight and humour we’d travelled back to a Blue Gum of old and been given a tempting invitation to roam through Back to the Brink.

*Allison Cadzow is researching a history of Australian women explorers which includes bushwalking explorers like Marie Byles, Dot Butler, and others who were involved in finding “original” routes, writing about, naming or mapping areas thought to be unknown to non-Aboriginal people. If you have any information or memories you think may be helpful, please contact her on (02) 4782 7252.*



*‘Paddy-made’ tent of Japara*



Alex Tucker Tracks &  
Access Officer

A BIG THANK  
YOU to those who attended  
the AGM at Kurnell AND

went the extra mile by staying for the two  
workshops. It is very useful for me to know the opinions of a  
larger group than those who attend committee meetings, where  
is never enough time for wide ranging discussions.

### **BLUE MOUNTAINS CROSSING WALK.**

The Workshop endorsed the concept of this walk after  
viewing the four options superimposed on the B.M Tourist Map.  
It also approved an application for funding of \$1,500 from the  
Conservation Alliance, an organisation now in its second year.  
The members are companies in the Outdoor Industry who each

## **VALE BERT CARLON**

**Five generations of Carlons have lived in the  
Megalong Valley.**

As a 19th century horse-drawn hearse took Bert for the  
last time through the township, friends and relatives remember  
him and his family's contribution to the community.

Long time residents of the valley, Bert's ancestry traces  
back to the convict ship, 'Hadlow', his great-great grandfather  
Bryan arrived in 1820, and settled in Burratorang in 1831.

Two more generations were to live and die in the  
Burratorang district, their names now appearing like land-  
marks, spread by the passage of time in the Blackheath  
community.

Born in 1924, Bert lived in and loved the Wild Dog  
Mountains and the Central Cox's River Basin. Days were spent as  
a lad eking out a living with the cattle his father owned,  
supplementing this with the sale of rabbit skins.

After World War II, Bert leased Rawson Moody's property,  
'The Commodore' on Cox's River, below the policeman's range.  
This area is well known to Bushwalkers of the pre-Warragamba  
Dam days as the walking route, Moody's Track, which provided  
the easiest way from Katoomba or Wentworth Falls to 'Veyret's  
Shack', and the Burratorang hinterland.

As a 16-year-old in 1940, Bert helped John Manson and  
Len Scotland of the Sydney Bush Walkers to install chains, wires  
and pitons on Carlon's Head. In 1960, Claude Veyret and Bert  
constructed the 'Veyret's Horse Track' as a short cut cattle route  
between the Middle Cox and and the Kowmung, now used by  
bushwalkers.

Bert leaves his wife, Norma, and five children, pins his  
ten grand-children as well as his sister and her husband and  
eleven children to carry on the bush spirit and Carlon name.

## **ALONG THE TRACK**

contribute 0.1 % of their sales revenue to a fund which supports  
environmental projects, particularly those which are ineligible  
for other grants. Peter Garrett is the Trustee. Applicants have to  
make their case in a doublesided A 4 page which is a refreshing  
change from the 30 page monsters required by some Govern-  
ment funding bodies. We hope to know the result of our  
application by the time you are reading this.

As yet we have had no direct response to the article in the  
August Bushwalker for an Honorary Project Officer, but there  
has been some interest in a group of two or three people  
undertaking this job. If we receive a grant, it is proposed to give  
an honorarium of up to \$1000 to the Project Officer(s). The  
balance may be used for part funding of a community aware-  
ness campaign. **HOWEVER, IF WE CANNOT FIND ONE OR  
MORE PROJECT OFFICERS BY ABOUT NOVEMBER 30, WE  
WOULD HAVE TO DECLINE A GRANT.**

### **ACCESS TO BONNUM PIC.**

Bonnum Pic is in Nattai National Park, Map Ref.  
HILLTOP 1 :25 000 476059. The most direct access is across  
private land. The landowner has been very friendly to  
bushwalkers ,BUT THIS IS LIKELY TO CHANGE. On some  
weekends he has had up to 90 walkers crossing his land and  
most have not bothered to phone to ask permission! I think that



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some of this number would have to be members of one of our member clubs. If your club is planning a walk to Bonnum and you don't know the landowner's phone number, give me a call on (02) 9451 4028. The owner is of course entitled to refuse access or limit numbers at any time, particularly when his cows are calving.

I will be contacting NPWS to see if alternative access is possible.

### **ACCESS .**

The Queensland Federation is compiling a database of landholders who allow bushwalkers to access National Parks across their properties. Would clubs be interested in providing information to such a database for NSW? It would help if you could discuss this with your friendly landowner before passing data to me, but I would seek the owner's written consent before publishing any information. I would certainly not place it on the Internet but could provide the data to clubs on a floppy. Once I have some support from clubs, I will seek to involve the NPWS District Managers in providing information. Is there a National Park surrounded by private land which you would visit if you knew the contact details?

## **STANDARDS AUSTRALIA -**

REVISION OF AS 2156 WALKING TRACK SIGNS. The second meeting of this S-A committee has progressed this revision towards a standardised system of track grading and signage for all Australia. International usage will be followed where possible. However, there is some evidence that while overseas countries have standardised on ski trail and rock climbing gradings, we may be leading on walking tracks. The details of the proposed standard will be of major interest to land managers and many walkers may never read the document. They will benefit from the display of uniform icons and symbols with explanatory notices at trackheads and in pamphlets. It is important to know that the names of tracks will not need to be changed, only the gradings will be standardised. So the Heysen Trail and the Birdsville Track, for example, will still be there, even though the names may not agree with definitions adopted by NSW and some other States. (Tracks are designed for walkers. Trails (fire, horse, 4WD, management, ski etc are designed for other purposes but can be used by

walkers.) At the next meeting, the committee will commence discussions of engineering construction standards for tracks and related structures. Theoretically these should comply with the Building Code of Australia, but logically the design criteria are very different. I would like to hear from any walker who would be interested in reviewing the draft documents.

### **Warning! Little Wobby And Beyond!**

For bushwalkers aiming to walk through Patonga to Wondabyne, The Icicles and Rocky Ponds, things have changed. Previously a phone call to the Little Wobby Sports and Recreation Centre would have given the permission needed to access the Highway Ridge Track and beyond.

Things have changed. Now walkers need to phone 0243-490600 with date of departure, name of club, number of walkers, destination and ETA. You will be issued with a letter which gives authority to access the area, and provides a disclaimer clause.

The Sports & recreation Centre wishes you pleasant walking.

## **Walking Holidays in New Zealand**

### **Milford Track**

We have arranged for a small group to walk the world famous Milford Track over New Year. Carry a full pack & save money. \$1650 covers airfares from Sydney, track fees and accommodation. Great walking, great scenery, great value.

### **Independent Walkers**

If you want the freedom to explore the wonderful tracks in New Zealand at your own pace, please call us. We'll help you get to & from the tracks & book accommodation before & after your walks. We can also book your flights from Australia.

### **Nature Safaris**

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### **Is your club on the World Wide Web?**

Would you like to have your clubs programme (minus names and meeting places) and newsletter listed on the net. If so send your files on an IBM formatted disk in Word or Works to the editor or send by email to [turton@fastlink.com.au](mailto:turton@fastlink.com.au). All clubs with the Confederation are already listed on the confederation's webpage with the information that is in the clubs list, but any club wanting more information to go to the general public this is an opportunity to do it. Webpage address <http://www.bushwalking.org.au>

The Committee and members of Confederation would like to wish all our readers a very merry Christmas and a happy new year



### **Australian Bushwalking Organisations**

**NSW.** Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs  
NSW Inc. PO Box 2090 Sydney 1043  
**NT.** Darwin Bushwalking Club PO Box 41568  
Casuarina 0811 Central Australian Bushwalkers PO Box 0818 Alice Springs 0817  
**QLD.** Queensland Federation of Bushwalking Clubs GPO Box 1573 Brisbane 4001  
**SA.** Federation of South Australian Walking Clubs Inc 1 Sturt St Adelaide 5000  
**Tas.** Federation of Tasmanian Bushwalking Clubs PO Box 1190 Launceston 7250  
**Vic.** Federation of Victorian Bushwalking Clubs Clubs Inc 241 Swan St Richmond 3121  
**WA.** Federation of Western Australian Bushwalkers Inc Private Box 414 PO Leederville 6903



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*Bill Avery*

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# CHAINSAWS SET TO RETURN TO OUR NATIONAL PARKS ?

Letter to the editor by Paul McCann

All bushwalkers and other users of our national parks should be aware of comments made by various state National Party MP's about the recent additions made to the national parks estate by the present Labour Government. To quote the {National Party} Member for Northern Tablelands (who is one of many in the National Party who believe that NSW has too much national parkland) "a future {Liberal-National} coalition government will undertake a review of all national parks in NSW to determine whether any areas are surplus to requirements. Any surplus parks will be returned to multiple land use areas" (in other words opened up for logging, mining and grazing). This review will be across the entire state and may include your favourite park. All national parks including sections of the Blue Mountains, Kanangra Boyd, Morton and Wollemi National Parks may be opened up for mining and grazing. In addition, a future coalition government will revoke wilderness declarations made by the present government.

I believe that the above is a bigger threat to our favourite bushwalking areas than by allowing certain areas to be opened up to controlled 4WD access. Hopefully controlled 4WD access means that small quiet family type groups will be using these areas instead of mobs of noisy 'yahoos' that currently use some areas {Yalwal Creek for example}. In my twenty five years of bushwalking I have found that I prefer quiet family groups to noisy 'yahoos' any day. I feel that these people (quiet family groups) can offer support to the preservation of national parks from present and future threats.

I think that bushwalkers through the Confederation should lobby the NPWS so we can be included in any discussions with the 4WD lobby. We should try to reach a compromise so some existing 4WD tracks remain for walkers only {or are closed and revegetated} and allowing other tracks to be used for controlled 4WD access. If we don't show that we are willing to

negotiate a compromise, we may be excluded from any discussions and may lose these areas for bushwalking.

The other thing we should be doing is visiting these areas and making sure the politicians don't get the idea that "no one goes there so it's all right to allow logging, mining and grazing". If you have a few days to spare and would like to visit some of these new park areas then call me on (02) 6772 6156 and I will try to arrange a suitable walk in a future walks program. One idea I have considered is to walk from the Victorian border to the Queensland border {or reverse} through the best of the escarpment parks in a series of walks of about one week's duration over a period of several years. Such walks would require chartering a mini bus from a town to the start and finish of each walk. If you are interested in this idea or can offer advice on the best route through a particular area please call me on {02} 6772 6156.

## **World Heritage listing Continued from Page 3**

with representatives from Environment Australia attending.

The first two meetings of the Reference Committee were largely devoted to "bringing the members up to speed". The perceived secrecy surrounding the nomination has been swept aside, with the publication of the 1994 and 1996 reports being made an issue at the first meeting. There has been strong criticism of the delays to date, and at the second meeting, members pressed for a detailed project plan for the remainder of the project.

At the third meeting of the Reference Committee, State and Federal representatives announced that joint funding was now available for the preparation of the nomination, that a consultant was to be engaged to prepare the nomination document, and that the terms of reference for the consultancy would be circulated without delay.

## **Letter to the editor**

WEA Illawarra Ramblers

We wish to advise that we fully support Brian Walker's comments in the February 1997 Bushwalker, ie

*"We are firmly of the belief that if any organisation is going to specify bushwalking leadership standards, it should be this Confederation and not any professional body"*

Included in the terms of reference would be the requirement that the nomination include the eucalyptus theme, but that other values which would contribute to a successful nomination were to be included. Commitment to a 1 July 1998 submission date was reiterated. Still to be determined was the area to be covered by the nomination – The Greater Blue Mountains area, as initially proposed by the Colong Foundation, or the enlarged area as supported by the National Herbarium – or something in between? This decision will probably be made at Ministerial level.

There is much to be done before 1 July 1998, but it would appear that there is now sufficient authoritative material on the record to give State and Federal authorities confidence that a viable nomination can be prepared. The nomination is far from completed, and there is no place for complacency – but, we have just seen the first glimmer of light for some time.

*\*Les Coyne represents the Nature Conservation Council and the Blue Mountains Conservation Society on the Blue Mountains World Heritage Reference Committee*

**The editorial committee would like to encourage all our readers to support our advertisers, without them we would not be able to publish this magazine.**



### **Aussie Omelette (with the lot) Ingredients**

3 eggs Pinch of salt Pinch of pepper 1 small potato, diced 1 rasher bacon, chopped 1 small onion, chopped 2 slices cheese 1 tomato Spoonful oil 1/4 cup milk

#### **Method**

Heat pan and add oil. Cook chopped onion, bacon and potato. Slice tomato and place in pan. Beat eggs, salt, pepper and milk in a bowl, pour over top of ingredients in pan and add cheese. When set, fold in half and cook a little longer. Serve.

## **COOKERY CORNER**

### **Roasted Potatoes in Foil**

Medium size potatoes Slices of cheese Minced Garlic Margarine Foil Slice the potatoes every 2 cms about 3/4 way through. Knife margarine and garlic into slices. Place cheese slices into each cut and wrap completely in foil. Shovel a hole in hot coals at edge of fire and gently place in each potato and cover. Cook for about 1/2 hour. Remove when easily pierced by a fork.

### **Pikelets**

2 eggs 500 mls milk A few good spoonfuls of sugar 1 1/2 cups self raising flour Big pinch salt 2 spoons margarine Strawberry jam

Beat eggs and add milk. Mix well, add sugar, flour and salt. Blend to a smooth mixture. Hang pan over coals and heat. Melt margarine, when hot add separate spoonfuls of mixture and cook until bubbles. Turn and cook both sides. Remove from pan. Eat hot with strawberry jam.

**Recipes from: A Guide to Bush Cooking: "Rabbit on a Shovel" by Wessa and Lummo With thanks from Vivien Dunne NPA**

## **WILLOW ERADICATION WALKS**

The Kowmung Committee aims to rid the river of introduced plants.

While many are beyond our resources to tackle or would require the removal of feral grazing animals to be effective, the eradication of willow trees is something which can be achieved within a couple of years. Already around 20km of river has been targeted with high success rates observed on follow up walks. On the weekend of January 31st Feb 1st 1998, we will be completing a missing link between Orange Bluff and Ferny Flat and over Easter we will target upstream of Cristies Creek. Both trips would start and finish at Kanangra Walls. The pace of work is never overwhelming and the surrounds are certainly an agreeable work environment, so we would welcome any interested persons. Contact John on 02 9526 7363.

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# THE WOLLEMI PINE

Ever since the discovery of the Wollemi Pine, many people have speculated about its location, which is supposed to be confidential. **Some time ago a 4WD organisation allegedly published the approximate location. Rightly so, the organisation was widely criticised by the conservation movement and the government.**

Perhaps inevitably, some bushwalkers appear now to have learnt of the location, and there are rumours that some individuals have visited the site. In at least one Confederation club, this has raised deep concerns that some walkers may not have an adequate understanding of the issues relating to the Pine.

The Wollemi Pine (*Wollemia nobilis*) was discovered in a ravine in Wollemi National Park about three years ago, giving rise to world headlines. The tree is of a new genus, belonging to the ancient family Araucariaceae. It is a living botanical relict from the Jurassic Period. There are reportedly only 40 adult specimens in existence. Why they survive in this one spot is a mystery. Could it be that there were many more trees 200 years ago, but the more accessible ones quickly succumbed to disease introduced after Europeans arrived?

The NPWS and the Botanic Gardens have been researching the Pine and working on its propagation. Seedlings are being grown under special conditions, though protection of the original population is essential for biodiversity and other reasons. According to the Draft Wollemi Pine Species Recovery Plan and the Draft Management Plan for Wollemi National Park, which have been on public exhibition for several months, the species is threatened by—

- unauthorised seed collection (which may impede long-term replacement of reproductive plants and cause a loss of genetic diversity);
- catastrophic fire events;
- the introduction of pathogens, especially fungal species such as

by Andy Macqueen  
Confederation Historian



*Tree ferns in the Wollemi National Park - photo courtesy Webster Publications*

*Phytophthora cinnamomi* (a form of dieback); and

- other impacts from unauthorised site visits such as trampling of seedlings, compaction of soil and the introduction of weeds.

Visits to the Pine have thus been highly restricted and controlled. According to Mr Bob Conroy, NPWS Central Region Manager, the NPWS and Botanic Gardens have recognised that even carefully controlled official visits may be harmful, and have discontinued the site research previously being conducted. Future official visits will be confined to one-off activities considered vital for protection of the species.

As stated in the Draft Management Plan for Wollemi National Park, persons found or proven to be at the site without permission may be prosecuted under the Threatened Species Conservation Act and/or the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

Legalities aside, the **Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs**

believes that responsible people should clearly avoid attempting to discover the location or visit the pine. With the best will in the world to take precautions against causing damage, you cannot be sure that the friend

you take with you or tell about it - or his friends or their friends - have similar good intentions.

**Any bushwalker who happens to hear of the supposed location of the Pine should keep it to himself, and not attempt to visit it. Any other course of action would be contrary to the conservation objects of the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs.**

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS 1998

***Put it on your Fridg***

<b>January</b>	17th-18th & 24th Remote area First-aid	20th - Confederation Meeting	31st -Feb1st Willow eradication weekend Kowmung River	
<b>February</b>	17th Confederation Meeting	21st-22nd & 28th Remote area First-aid		
<b>March</b>	8th- Metrogaine-6hr Sydney Metro	17th Confederation Meeting	28th-29th Search and Rescue Training weekend	Willow Edadication weekend - Easter Kowmung
<b>April</b>	4th Autumn 12/24 hour Rogaine	18th-19th & 25th Remote area First-aid	21st April Confederation Meeting	Willow Eradication weekend - Easter Kowmung
<b>May</b>	16th-17th & 23rd Remote area first-aid	19th Confederation Meeting		
<b>June</b>	14th Paddy Pallin Rogaine	16th Confederation Meeting	20th-21st & 27th Remote Area First-aid	27th-28th Confederation's rescue Services Rogaine
<b>July</b>	18th 19th & 25th Remote Area First-aid	21st Confederation meeting		
<b>August</b>	8th-9th NSW Rogaine Championships North of Maitland	18th Confederation Meeting	22nd Confederation AGM at Newcastle	15th-22nd Great Grose Gorse Walk
<b>September</b>	5th Lake Macquarie Rogaine	15th Confederation Meeting	18th Confederation's Ball/Bush Dance	19th-20th & 26th Remote Area First-aid
<b>October</b>	17th-18th & 24th Remote area First-aid	20th Confederation Meeting		
<b>November</b>	8th Upside-down Rogaine	17th Confederation Meeting	21st-22nd & 28th Remote Area First-aid	
<b>December</b>	15th Confederation Meeting	19th-20th & 26th Remote Area First-aid		

The Remote Area First-aid course is designed to equip those individuals whose interests, activities or employment takes them to isolated areas, with the knowledge and skills necessary to give ongoing care, over a prolonged period of time, to an ill/injured casualty. For enquires contact St John Ambulance N.S.W. (02) 9212-1088. Courses will also be conducted on request for groups of 12 or more.

To become a member of the Rogaine Association phone Graeme Cooper (02) 6772-3584 email [gcooper@metz.une.edu.au](mailto:gcooper@metz.une.edu.au) or visit the website at <http://rogaine.asn.au>

The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs represents over 65 clubs and 8500 walkers in NSW. Visit our website at <http://www.bushwalking.org.au> - email [turton@fastlink.com.au](mailto:turton@fastlink.com.au). Phone (02) 9548-1228

Any member of any club may attend meetings of the Confederation.

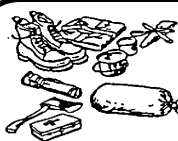


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# THE BLUE GUM BALL



Bankstown Bushwalking Club carried out their threat to beat Mount Druitt for the most wins of the table decorating trophy by winning it for the seventh consecutive year. They are seen in the top photo proudly showing of their winning table.

Thais Turner (bankstown's president) as usual came up with a costume to compliment the event. The 200 or so

people who attended the ball danced the night away and thoroughly enjoyed themselves to the music of "The Currency Lads".

***Date of Ball in  
1998 - 18th  
September***

Thais Turner with the shield. - right and dressed as a Blue Gum - far right. Acouple of happy dances bottom right.

Trying not to be outdone by Bankstown, Scripture Union Bushwalkers came up with novel table decoration



# **CRACLAI R TOURS**

Eric Sargent in 1970 led his first party trekking the highlands of Tasmania and so pioneered ecotourism in the state and is about to commence his 28th year introducing people of all ages to the wonders of the Cradle Mountain and Lake St Clair World Heritage Area though the company he founded Craclair Tours based in Devenport. His busiest period is summer when he takes on university students with environment qualifications as part of team of up 16 guides.

Eric won't talk about his age, his he will say is he is old enough to

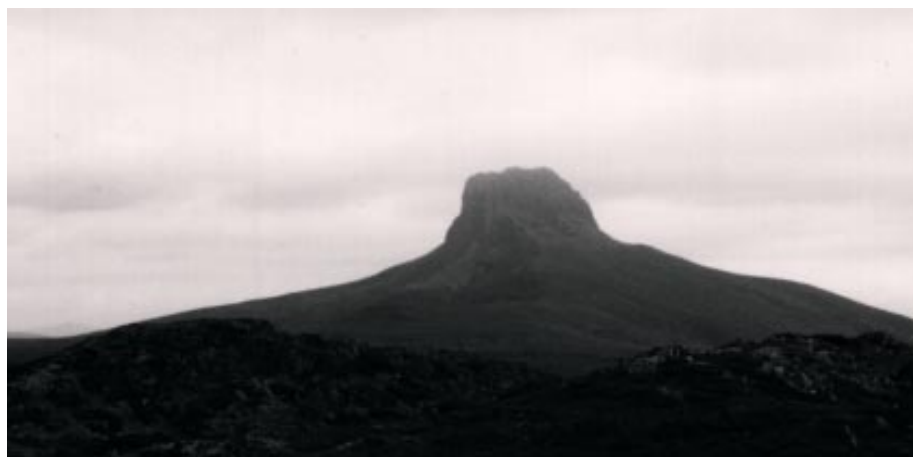
have seen the body of a Tasmanian Tiger washed up on a beach and young enough to be taking several hundred people a year walking through Tasmania's spectacular wilderness areas. In life Eric has had his own share troubles.

Nearly 12 years ago he was crippled by arthritis and thus was unable to walk in his beloved mountains. However, a hip replacement had him on the track within months, again tantalising walkers with the wealth of information and anecdotes accumulated over the decades.

One of his favourite stories is about a Hungarian adventurer he met in

the 1970's 'The man could be heard singing from kilometres away, his voice echoing between the mountains. When the two finally met couple of hours later the man told Eric that he had walked from the bottom of the state to Cradle Mouatin and was planning to push on to the north coast. What was amazing to Eric was that between the bottom and top of Tasmania there's a small transport problem the South-West Wilderness Area. It stretches for hundreds of kilometres and is broken only once by a sign of civilisation the Lyell Highway, between Queenstown and Hobart.

Eric doesn't know how many times he's walked the Overland Track from Cradle Mountain to Lake St Clair during the last 27 years. "Averging; it out I must have walked about 220 times from Cradle to Narcisses (the northern end oflake! St Clair), though I haven't bothered to keep count" On 11th Saturday, 1995 to celebrate Craclair Tours 25 years of continuous Ecotourism Trecking Elsiu climbed Mt Ossa Tasmania's highest peak for what is likely to be a record 70th time.



*Barn Bluff - Tasmania's Cradle Mountain National Park*

## **ST JOHN LAST TIME**

## **THE NEW SOUTH WALES BIRD ATLASSERS**



*Jen Southern  
Publicity Officer*

***The New South Wales Bird Atlassers (NSWBA) welcomes assistance in our objective of monitoring the birds throughout this state, where ever they may be found.***

Observing birds and recording information on them is a recreation that may be enjoyed by people of all ages, - individuals as well as groups. The level of participation is left to each member to determine, so birds may be observed when ever and where ever one chooses. However we do ask that, when ever possible, atlas sheets be completed on a monthly basis.

For our purpose, NSWBA has divided NSW into blocks or grids of

approximately 16kms., based on latitude and longitude. Grid maps, brochures and as many atlas sheets as may be required are sent - free of charge - to anyone anywhere who may be interested in this hobby.

Information sheets on raptors, owls, corvids, frogmouths and nightjars are available for a small fee, as are complete sets of grid maps covering the whole of the state.

Information gathered on locality,

breeding and habitat preferences of each species of bird has been transferred to the Atlas database, which now contains over a million records. Statistics gathered from the western districts of NSW have been used to produce **THE BIRDS OF WESTERN NEW SOUTH WALES: A PRELIMINARY ATLAS**. Copies of this atlas are available for \$32.50.

Enquiries may be addressed to JEN SOUTHERON, Publicity Officer, "OLD DROMANA", MOREE. NSW. 2400. or Phone 067 533 242.



*The Editor and friend taking it easy on the Pelion Plains - Tasmania*

# **Wild Australia ACF**



## KALANG FALLS CANYONING TRAGEDY

**It was with very deep regret that the Watagan Wanderers Bushwalking Club report the accidental death of one of their club members while on a club trip.**

Phil Atkinson died as a result of severe head injuries sustained at Kalang Falls. The following paragraphs (slightly edited) are reprinted from the Watagan Wanderers' newsletter. *VALE, PHIL ! On Saturday the 19th April 1997 the Watagan Wanderers lost one of their most active and respected members when Phil Atkinson was accidentally killed on a trip to Kalang Falls at Kanangra Walls. A team of four experienced club members was descending into the valley following the Kalang Brook watercourse which included several large abseils. The party had abseiled past the first four waterfalls and was walking along a track following the creek when Phil either slipped or tripped causing him to fall down a short slope before rolling over the edge of an eight metre waterfall onto rocks. Phil sustained severe head injuries and a broken leg in the fall. The team included a trained first aid person and had a fully equipped first aid kit with them. Phil was stabilised by stopping blood loss and splinting fractures. Two of the party then went for help while the third person stayed with Phil. The only way out required three more large abseils of 50 to 60 metres and some rock scrambling to the valley floor before the track was reached which led back to the car park on the top plateau. It took the two members four hours from when they left Phil until they were able to contact rescue people by mobile phone from their vehicle.*

The lifesaver rescue helicopter was mobilised and arrived on the scene two hours later. A doctor and paramedic were dropped in to treat Phil and the helicopter returned to the cliff top and picked up two more paramedics. At this point Phil stopped breathing and was put on life support. While Phil was being attended by the medical team the other member was winched out and evacuated to the cliff top by the helicopter. The helicopter then returned and brought out Phil and half the medical team. By this time it was dark and after transferring Phil to an ambulance vehicle for further treatment the helicopter returned to the canyon to try to retrieve the remaining paramedics. After two attempts this was aborted until the next morning and the chopper returned to the cliff top to transport

*By Margaret Covi, Watagan Wanderers Bushwalking Club and Maurice Smith, immediate past Confederation Insurance Officer*

Phil to hospital in Sydney. The life support was turned off on Sunday morning. Phil never regained consciousness after the fall. Medical and Rescue teams commented on the efforts and actions of the team members following the accident. They said everything was done correctly and they had given Phil every opportunity. The first aid treatment was what was needed, the exact location had been given, fires had been lit and markers had been placed allowing the helicopter to go straight to the accident location. We extend our deepest and sincere sympathy to Phil's family and friends. He will be sadly missed by all. Margaret Covi

Margaret commented "The other three people on the trip were wearing helmets. Phil said he had forgotten his helmet on this occasion and no one had a spare. They had driven out to Kanangra to do the trip before realising and so decided to go ahead. I think we have always been a very safety conscious club and it has always been our club's policy to wear helmets and unfortunately the occasion of this accident was probably the only time some one went without a helmet - which only reinforces the fact that they should be worn always, without exception. You can be sure that we have a strict "No Hat - No Go" policy now - but for us that's like bolting the stable door after the horse has bolted."

LETTER FROM WESTPAC HELICOPTER SERVICE "On 19/4/97 the Lifesaver Helicopter assisted a bushwalker at Kanangra Walls. His name was Philip Atkinson. He sustained a severe head injury and was air lifted to St George Hospital.

As the doctor attending him at the scene, I had the opportunity to see first aid efforts of his companions. These were of a very high standard in the most difficult of situations. The two climbers that went for help had raised the alarm very quickly by a rapid completion of the climb. This enabled us to gain access just before last light.

The third team member stayed with him for some hours continuing his care till we arrived. She was able to calmly tell us of the events and had provided support to him in what must have been a very lonely situation. I wish to formally congratulate all three of these people on their efforts. They undertook a sad and difficult task well. It

will take months for many of you to recover from the loss of such a friend but you must be heartened by knowing that everything that could have been done was done in this case."

### **The lesson to be learned by you**

Whether Phil would have died if he had been wearing a helmet will never be known. BUT?? What is your club's helmet policy? Will your club adopt the Watagan Wanderers' policy of "No Hat - No Go". We need to learn from this tragic experience.

**Subsequent actions** Since the death of Phil Atkinson, the Watagan Wanderers have set up a program to formalise training and to record the experience gained by its members, with abseiling being the first activity to be targeted. The club is lucky in having a member who is a Qualified Train the Trainer who is assisting to develop training courses for club activities in this area. To date, club abseiling record sheets and individual experience record sheet have been developed. A training course with written and practical tests for basic abseiling and written and practical tests for advanced abseiling is in draft form and is expected be implemented by the end of 1997. Certificates will also be issued after successful completion of these courses.

The Club's committee has also become far more active in all aspects of safety. While previously it encouraged members to wear safety gear on club activities, it is now mandatory for members to wear safety helmets when abseiling and canyoning, and to wear life jackets for water activities such as canoeing.

Although Phil's death was an unfortunate accident which did not happen during an abseil section of the descent of the Falls, it was very traumatic for club members. The main question asked by investigating authorities was "what was Phil's experience and ability in this situation." The club has always recorded events and people who attended. However, it would have been a definite advantage to pull out Phil's personal record detailing his abseiling and canyoning experience and said "here is Phil's personal record of experience and training". We recommend to all clubs they look at their recording of their members' activities and abilities and if they do nothing else they should implement a personal records sheet for all members especially in areas of abseiling, rock climbing and caving.

**BOOK REVIEW**

## **'BLUE RIVERS: A NARRATIVE OF TIME IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS'**

'Through the riffle at the outlet of the pool, threading between the boulders encountered yesterday and then over the fall, I feel the tug of the water and the thrill of the unknown river lying ahead.'

And so, the solo traveller launches into another unique journey down one of our wild rivers.

It is hard to describe Ross Brownscombe's very special new book to bushwalkers fed on a diet of bland trip reports. At a superficial level it's about five solo raft trips down five wild rivers of the Blue Mountains - the Wollondilly, Kowmung, Grose, Colo and Macdonald. But I've mislead you already.

'Blue Rivers' definitely isn't is a blow-by-blow story of one man's conquest of the rivers—just as it isn't a route guide to the rivers, an instruction book on rafting, or a volume of wilderness photography. If, on the other hand, you are looking for excellent Australian wilderness writing, this book is for you. It will stimulate you, it will challenge you, and—hopefully—it will reaffirm and strengthen your appreciation of our wilderness and the need to protect it in these worrying times.

So, just what is 'Blue Rivers' all about?

Wilderness means different things to each of us. It is something one

*by Ross Brownscombe  
Published by Forever Wild Press  
Retail price \$16.95*

*Review by Andy Macqueen  
Confederation's Historian*

might find at the foot of a gnarled Angophora; on a sandstone shelf; under a Desert Oak; in a rainforest gully; or—as in Ross Brownscombe's case—on the bank of a wild river in the Blue Mountains.

Some of us have walked along those rivers. Few would have walked all of them, and I know of no-one other than Brownscombe who has rafted them. However, his achievement is not that he has 'done the rivers' but that he has experienced them in a deep, personal way and, in writing this book, enabled the reader to intimately participate. We can share his solitude, and all the anxiety, frustration, anger, exhilaration and pleasure that goes with it. We can share his reflective encounters with astonishing geological events of millions of years ago, and with the explorer George Caley, whom he meets in the Devils Wilderness. We can feel and understand his cynicism about some others who have gone before, and yet others who are still out there.

The subtitle 'a Narrative of Time in the Blue Mountains' may seem puzzling at first. Surely a narrative involves the passage of time: how can we have a

narrative of time? Yet, really, this book is about time. The theme pervades every page, whether it is the writer's own personal, precious time on the river, or his thoughts of the experiences of explorers or others gone before him, or the unfathomable past time of the landscape through which he passes. Each river evokes the passage of time. I am left with the overriding impression of the irrelevance of Brownscombe's presence in the landscape - or my presence or yours. Nature is bigger than all of us, and in eons to come, when the roads and the people and the Warragamba Dams are long gone, the rivers will still flow.

In his prologue, Brownscombe quotes Wallace Stegner: 'A place is not a place until it has a poet'. He goes on to say that he 'wanted, in as modest a way as possible to be that poet. In this time of increasing pressure on all of nature, all wild places need to have someone to speak for them, to describe ... the spiritual dimensions of the landscape, the cultural and human interactions that have made it what it is'. He has succeeded. This book is superbly written, with a tantalising poetic style.

If you would like a refreshing dose of wild rejuvenation, try this book. Find a quiet spot, take one river at a time, take your time, and be open. Let Ross Brownscombe take you down the river.



*Lake Windamere - Tasmania's Cradle Mountain National Park*

## CLUBS AFFILIATED WITH THE CONFEDERATION

Active Singles Bushwalking Club	Morisset Bushwalkers	Tamworth Dushwalking & Canoe Club
A.N.C. Bushwalkers Inc	Mount Druitt Bushwalking Club Inc	The Bush Club Inc
Bankstown Bushwalking Club Inc	Mudgee Bushwalking Club Inc.	The Coast and Mountain Walkers of NSW (Inc.)
Barrier Rangers	Narrabri Bushwalking Club inc	The Inverell Bushwalking Club Inc
Berowra Bushwackers Club	National Parks Association Inc.	The Macquarie Explorers Club
Brisbane Water Outdoors Club Inc.	Nepean Bushwalking and Outdoor Club Inc	The Southern Adventure Society
Canberra Bushwalking Club Inc	Newcastle Bushwalking Club Inc	University of Technology, Sydney -
Catholic Bushwalking Club	Newcastle Family Walkabout Club	The Wanderers Bushwalking and
Central Coast University of the 3rd Age Walkers	Newcastle Ramblers Bushwalking Club Inc	The Wildemess Society (Sydney) Inc
Central West Bushwalking Club Inc	Northern Rivers Bushwalkers Club Inc	Three Peaks Outdoor Society Inc
Coonabarabran Bushwalking Club Inc	Outdoor Adventure Club	Upper Blue Mountains Bushwalking Club Inc
Endeavour Campus Walkers	Outdoor Club of NSW Inc	Upper Lachlan Bushwalkers
Fairfield Bushwalking Club Inc	Ramblers Bushwalking Club	Warragamba Walkers Inc
Geehi Bushwalking Club Inc	Scripture Union Bushwalkers' Club	Warringah Bushwalking Club Inc.
Goulburn Bushwalking Club	South Coast Bushwalkers Assoc.	Watagan Wanderers Inc
Glen Innes Bushwalking Club Inc	Shoahaven Bushwalkers Inc	WEA Illawana Bushwalkers Club
Gunedah Bushwalking Club Inc	Southern Highland Bushwalkers Inc	WEA Ramblers & Naturalists Club
Hawkesbury Canoe Club Inc	Span Outdoors Inc	Weekday Walkers Inc.
Hunter Area Walkabout Club	Springwood Bushwalking Club Inc	Y.E.C. Bushwalking Club
Ku-ring-gai Recreation Association Inc.	Sutherland Bushwalking Club Inc	Yarrawood Bushwalking Club Inc
Ku-ring-gai Bushwalkers	Sydney Bush Walkers Inc	YHA Social & Outdoor Club - Sydney Region
Lake Side Lurchers	Sydney University Bushwalkers	

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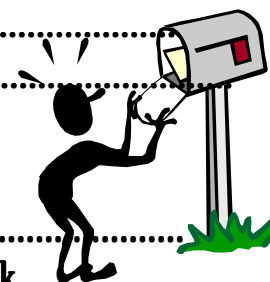
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# BUSHWALKER WILDERNESS RESCUE



On Tuesday 7th October, 1997 a group of two couples was reported overdue on a bushwalk in the Ettrema

region. The long weekend had started out fine but had deteriorated into state wide rain. Their trip was from The Jumps down Bullfrog Creek. Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue was contacted by Wollongong Police Rescue but even as the details were being discussed a phone call came in on another line that the group were OK. Another one for the books.

Late Friday afternoon on 10th October, 1997 BWR was called out by Berrima VRA to assist with a search for a group of three that were well overdue. They had planned to descend Starlights Track on Monday afternoon 6th October.

I was nearly home when the pager went off. There was also a message waiting to call Berrima VRA. Before I could call Berrima one of our S & R committee rang and brought me up to date. They were keen to have our experience in co-ordination as well as many experienced bushwalker searchers. When I did call Berrima they had a report of a possible sighting of the missing group. They promised to call back as soon as they could confirm the report; maybe 15 minutes. In less than 5 minutes the callout was off. Another one for the records.

## **What is Bushwalker Wilderness Rescue**

This short article aims to give a quick sketch of what Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue (BWR) is about and hopefully enthruse you to be part of your Clubs callout list. Very often members of Confederation talk about S & R in a way that implies we "all know" what it is yet rarely is it explained to new bushwalkers.

BWR is the search and rescue section (S & R) of the Confederation. Thus it is not me or anyone else on our organising committee. The committees role is to bring bushwalkers together,

*Keith Maxwell Bushwalker  
Wilderness Rescue Director*

when required, to provide a unique rescue resource to the people of NSW. We are NSW State Rescue Board accredited as a specialist squad in bush rescue. No other volunteer squad in NSW has this status. BWR was established after a major search in the Grose Valley in October, 1938 where bushwalkers assisted but in an informal way. Although there has always been an element of self rescue for fellow bushwalkers BWR could never exist on such a selfish principle. By being willing to help the public we present a positive image of bushwalkers and their club organisation (the Confederation).

A recent example of great publicity was the disappearance of a small aircraft in appalling weather. Extensive aerial searching failed to find any trace of it or its young pilot and passenger. Such disappearances are traumatic for the immediate family as often their relatives are only found by accident years later in a highly decomposed state. So many questions remain unanswered; was death quick or did they suffer? Did one or both survive but were lost with no idea of where civilisation is. Did they freeze to death? There still are missing aircraft in NSW. Image their relief when an observant bushwalker (Brian Walker of CMW) looked across a valley behind Kanangra Walls and saw the plane. It had flown into the top of a ridge in such a way that there was no visible gap from above. Relief turned to anguish when no human remains were found at the accident site. BWR was able with other rescue services to locate the bodies in this truly rugged terrain. This was a major news item twice since the coroner had to do a report.

## **How is Bushwalker Wilderness Rescue Organised?**

Essentially it is bushwalkers with radios. Our HF radio network is simple to use but very effective in transmitting out of deep / narrow valleys. Mobile phones and other short wave radio networks cannot do this. When called upon you need to come fully equipped for a bushwalk in remote terrain. Food, map,

parka - the lot! A radio will be issued to each search team. Before you leave home you will get minimal details of the location and time of the meeting place. You are not expected to be Superman (Superperson?) in volleys. While Police are in overall control you will be co-ordinated by bushwalkers from our S & R Committee.

The BWR Director is elected each year at the Confederation AGM and reports monthly to the executive meetings. The S & R Committee maintains our rescue trailer and radio network as well as the callout register. Each Confederation Club has three telephone contact persons. There will be a home and work phone number so we can always locate one contact person who then becomes the S & R co-ordinator for their club. Their role is simply to arrange for the number of bushwalkers requested, usually one or two car loads. For ease of organisation, where possible, bushwalkers are kept together in their club groups as search teams. In fact we usually ask you who is going to be your group leader.

For cliff rescue BWR has a "Rock Squad" who are all trained to the ALVRI Standard. These specialist groups were all experienced bushwalkers and canyoneers before they commenced the ALVRI training. The ALVRI training means they can work with other rescue groups in a common procedure for the safe set-up of abseils, prussiks (i.e. going up instead of down) and lifting and lowering of stretchers. They regularly train with other ALVRI groups.

## **Training.**

BWR really needs you to come and practise the additional skills required to be more than just a bushwalker. Your bushwalking skills make you a valuable asset. There are many well meaning professional and volunteer rescuers who have neither the same fitness or ability to move through rugged terrain as an "average" bushwalker. Did I tell you about the grandmother in my club? On a major search around Claustal Canyon the Policeman assigned to one club team

# BUSHWALKER WILDERNESS RESCUE

said, "I don't want any old woman to slow us up". The leader defended her and of course she easily kept up but, not so for the Policeman. There are three training weekends each year. Two general weekends and the Rogaine. This is where we get to know you on a personal basis and not just as a name on a list.

The general weekends cover search organisation and practice searches, radios, wilderness self rescue, observation and tracking, helicopter winching etc.

Anyone who can't navigate to me is just an incomplete bushwalker - a follower. There are some bush areas where navigation is a challenge to even the most experienced. However there are many areas where some basic knowledge is all you need to dramatically improve your bushwalking pleasure. The Rogaine is set up to help the beginner have good practice with many easy checkpoints. Experienced bushwalkers have an excellent chance to hone their skills. Successfully navigating to a marker is a great confidence boost. To put together a route to link many markers is a great mental challenge. BWR is also aiming to publicise itself among the other invited rescue services. To date BWR has maintained an enviable record. The overall standard is high and the range of scores between the best and worst bushwalker teams is smaller than for any other group. This is clear proof to me that bushwalkers have special skills.

## HOW TO CONTACT BWR -

In an **emergency** phone (from anywhere in NSW) **016020** and ask for the operator to send your (short) message to Pager No. **277321**. Don't forget to include your phone number and STD code. Remember you are not sending your life story but merely asking BWR to ring you back. While waiting for our phone call back to you start thinking about how many walkers may be available from your club to assist.

The pager network is always monitored and a return phone call should come quickly.

For further information on BWR, training weekends, First Aid courses etc. phone

**Director Keith Maxwell**

**(02) 9622 0049**

**Secretary John Tonitto**

**(02) 9541 2654**

## SEARCH & RESCUE TRAINING - MARCH 28TH/29TH, 1998.

### Location - CATARACT SCOUT PARK

An extensive program is being planned for this weekend. The training will be at two levels representing two major themes - wilderness self rescue and rescue operator.

### Wilderness Self Rescue

This program will emphasise self reliance in good pre planning through to resolving trip emergencies. Planned topics include GPS, improvised evacuation techniques for minor injuries, leadership, simple knots, and survival skills. This will suit beginners as well as those who expect to be available for searches.

### Rescue Operator

This more intensive training will include many challenging sessions. Group problem solving, helicopter winching, roping skills, deduction and observation, remote area first aid, rescue organisation and etc. These activities will be aimed at those more experienced walkers who wish to be part of our first call group. Future Rock Squad members would be drawn from this group.

Please advertise this interesting weekend in your club walks program for March '98. More details will be send closer to the event.

For more information contact -

**Keith Maxwell 9622 0049 (h)**

**John Tonitto 9541 2654 (h)**

*From the World Wide Web (where perhaps it should have been left!)*

### **Universal method of finding North with a watch.**

It works for both analogue and digital watches in both the Northern and Southern hemispheres.

1. Take watch off wrist and hold in one hand above your head.

2. Wave your arm in a circular motion above your head and at any random moment release the watch from your grasp. Observe the direction the watch goes after release,

3. If you can locate the watch where it landed on the ground then repeat 1 and 2 above until you cannot locate it.

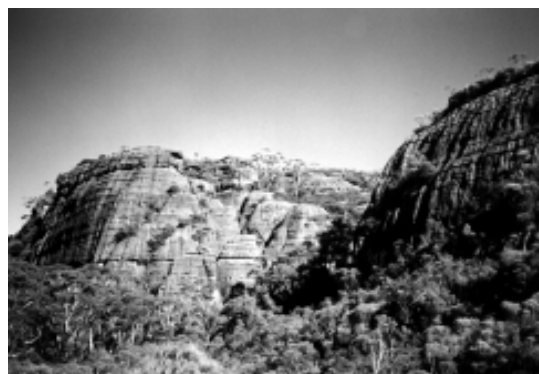
4. The direction in which the watch proceeded when it was lost is clearly West.

5. North is therefore 90 to the right of the direction in which the watch new when it went West.

### **Alternatively, how to tell digital north**

Using your digital watch, visualise an analogue watch telling the same time, and draw it on the ground with a twig.

Now stick your twig vertically into the ground at the centre of your clockface then turn the ground until the shadow of your twig falls upon the hour hand.....



Monolith Valley - The Budawangs