

NEWSLETTER

of the

BUSHWALKERS OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The N.S.W. Federation of Bushwalking Clubs
G.P.O. Box 2090, Sydney, 2001.

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CLOTHING IN THE TOP END

(The Top End is, roughly speaking, Katherine and points north, including Arnhem Land, in the Northern Territory).

Shoes - Shoes are the most important item in the bushwalking wardrobe. This should be no problem, yet I have seen many walkers nearly crippled by poor choice of footwear. On three different week long walks, I have seen feet reduced to a bloody mass of blisters by new or seldom used walking boots. On the other extreme was a fellow who survived a weekend trip barefoot, over rocks and spinifex, with only minor cuts - he was incredibly lucky. Thongs on a long walk are a bad joke; they offer only poor traction and tend to disintegrate if used over sharp rocks. My personal choice is a good sturdy pair of sandals. (I once had a rather well-worn pair disintegrate). A well broken in pair of hiking boots would serve equally well. Any other choice is foolish and asking for trouble.

Socks - Most people find that socks reduce the likelihood of blisters and improve the foot comfort. Washing socks each day improves their effectiveness. A spare pair of socks is probably the most important spare item to carry.

Pants - In the Top End climate, shorts are the obvious choice, but many of the most interesting walks go through low scrub, which leaves uncovered legs a mass of sore scratches. The walker jumps into the water seeking relief, only to be met with a more unpleasant stinging sensation. And there is also the matter of the marks left on the legs afterwards. In addition, for individuals unaccustomed to the Top End sunshine, long pants offer protection from sunburn. And finally, they can also offer protection from mosquitos. For all these reasons, it is a good idea to take along a pair of long pants on most walks.

Shirts - Long sleeved shirts offer protection from both sun and mosquitos, but for most people a short sleeved shirt is fine. However, unless you normally wear T-shirts, a shirt with a collar will prevent your neck from becoming sunburnt.

Hats - Only a fool goes on a long walk without a hat. Top End sunshine is powerful. A hat keeps you cooler, adds protection against sunburn, and markedly decreases the likelihood of heat exhaustion or sunstroke.

Swimming Togs - Half the fun of Top End walks is swimming. After a long hot walk, what could be more pleasant than to jump into a cool billabong or creek. If you are going to be swimming in any more or less public place, swimming togs are obviously essential. If you are going off the beaten track, however, you may prefer to swim nude. If so, beware of overexposure to the sun. I have seen more than one otherwise heavily tanned individual suffer uncomfortable and somewhat embarrassing sunburns because they did not realise just how much effect the sun has on lily-white skin.

Raincoats - This is a wet season option. If you wear a raincoat that cannot breathe, you will wind up hot and wet. This is a matter of individual preference.

RUSSELL WILLIS
Darwin Bushwalking
Club
12 Carrington St.,
Millner, N.T.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

People with some disability are to be commended for striving to lead a normal lifestyle and it is saddening to see them in the embarrassing position of being the subject of an S & R operation.

Their predicament is all the more regrettable when it could be fairly argued that their only mistake was to expect 'normal' treatment by walks leaders. All too often Bushwalkers S & R has been alerted and even called in to find that the leader or organiser of a trip has not provided for adequate assessment of the health and fitness of persons intending to enjoy the planned trip.

A reasonable counter-argument is that people with some ailment should inform the leader of the fact. Then imagine how many leaders will want to take you along. Every time a similar situation arose the person with some disability would find himself once more being reminded of a situation he most probably wishes never existed.

There must be some means whereby clubs are encouraged to assess the suitability of people for trips without completely discouraging those who do not enjoy the same health as the majority, yet still offer them that challenge of the outdoors.

FERGUS BELL

PADDY PALLIN ORIENTEERING CONTEST

DATE: SATURDAY 26th MAY 1979

VENUE: LEURA

DIRECTIONS: Follow Great Western Highway through Wentworth falls towards Leura. 1.5Km after passing under rail bridge turn right onto Mt. Hay Road, (large concrete water tanks on right at turn off), follow P.P.O.C. signs on Mt. Hay Road for 6Km to assembly point.

TYPE OF EVENT: 1. This will be a 3½ hour duration point score event for teams of two.

2. The standard 2" to 1 mile (Katoomba) map will be used (available at start).

3. There will be perpetual trophies awarded to the winners, and cash order prizes awarded to the first three place getters in the following divisions:-

- A. OPEN
- B. MIXED

START TIMES: 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.

ENTRIES: Enter on day at assembly point.
Fee \$1.00 per team

NOTE: Hot drinks will be available at assembly point.

ENQUIRIES: Ian Landon Smith
Phone (02) 43 5129 (Business)
(02) 4873411 (A.H.)

SOME NEW OFFICE BEARERS

Following the resignations of Peter Harris as President and Len Newland as Minutes Secretary, there was a change in some positions of the Office Bearers. These are:

President	David Noble
Senior Vice President	Peter Tuft
Junior Vice President	Murray Scott
Conservation Convenor	Bob Burton
Project Office	Peter Harris
Minutes Secretary	Spiro Curtis
Ball Convenor	Bruce Vote

The first thing to sort out when discussing food (or anything else) is to decide on the time scale of interest. Over a long enough time (say 150 years) any diet will kill you. Eaten as a significant proportion of one's diet over twenty or thirty years, it is possible that such things as white flour, refined sugar, table salt or saturated fats may be deleterious to your health - although the medical evidence on this is far from conclusive; certainly all the nuts who change their diets in hopes of avoiding heart disease and cancer would be better advised to stick to their Chicko-rolls and to do more MH trips instead. On a time scale of a year or so, all that matters is that one's diet includes the body's minimum requirements of various proteins, vitamins and minerals.

For the bushwalker who is willing to restrict himself to trips of up to two months at altitudes below 5,000 m, and who is not interested (like the marathon runner or long-lauf racer) in tricking his body into overdoing itself over short periods of a day or less, nutrition reduces to one thing - calories (or kilojoules as they like to say these days).

Well not quite. Suppose you are planning an extended trip and you look up the book and see that margarine has the highest energy value (32 kilojoules per gram) of all the foods listed, does this mean you should fill your food-bag with Meadow-Lea rather than Alliance (about 15kj/g, and ten times the price)? Unfortunately not. The reason margarine, butter, etc have so many kilojoules is that they are mostly fat, and the average westernized stomach refuses to absorb more than a fairly small proportion of its energy as fat (6%, according to one source - this can be increased with training, as any Eskimo will tell you). However, except for such extreme cases, the average healthy digestive system will absorb just about anything that is pushed into it, and it doesn't make much difference whether you mix things up or not - so if you like honey and onions together, as I do, that's OK.

Of course some things are digested faster than others. All sorts of sugars, but especially sucrose (refined white sugar), go straight into the bloodstream in no time flat. Conversely, if you expect the next meal to be a long time off, you should perhaps eat something that takes a long time to digest - I guess this is about the only thing to be said in the favour of porridge.

Having dismissed nutrition, we get on to the real determining factors in the choice of food for bushwalking. These are (1) appeal; (2) convenience; and (3) cost. As for appeal, there's not much to be said. You know what you like. What you like at home is probably a good first guess as to what you'll like in the bush. The best way to pack for most weekend trips is to take a Paddybag and go to the refrigerator and start taking out things you like until the bag is about three-quarters full. This should take at most five minutes.

For an extended trip, take two Paddybags, go to the nearest supermarket and/or delicatessen and/or health food shop (wherever you usually shop), and keep on putting in things you like until both bags are full. This should take about half an hour, and will do for a twelve-day trip. For trips longer than twelve days, it is less masochistic to take only twelve days' food and go hungry for the rest, rather than carry the extra weight at the beginning. Someone once said: "One of the most demanding aspects of organizing an extended trip is arranging the food." This is bullshit. (Note that Mountain Equipment bags may be used instead of Paddybags if you prefer.)

As far as convenience is concerned, the first thing to decide is whether you will be wanting to light a fire every day. On some trips, especially overseas where you may be above the tree-line for days on end, this is impossible. On fairly hard trips, you may not want to bother, especially in the morning. On the other hand, if you will be spending a lot of time around the camp, fire-lighting and cooking can be a pleasant way of spending it. If you decide that you won't have a fire for at least some of the time, you have to choose between taking a stove and taking food that doesn't need cooking. Most people seem to pick the stove, why I'm not sure. Stoves are temperamental and heavy and use fuel which leaks through everything, then they blow up and set the tent on fire, if you have a tent. Nevertheless, some people develop strong emotional ties with stoves, and enjoy coaxing and cajoling them. If you have such a person on your trip, by all means bring a stove. If not, bring lots of bread and cheese and chocolate and nuts and fresh and dried fruit. You'll eat nearly as well (maybe better) and it won't weigh much more (maybe less, when you subtract the weight of the stove and fuel, not to mention billies and frying pans and bottle-washers.)

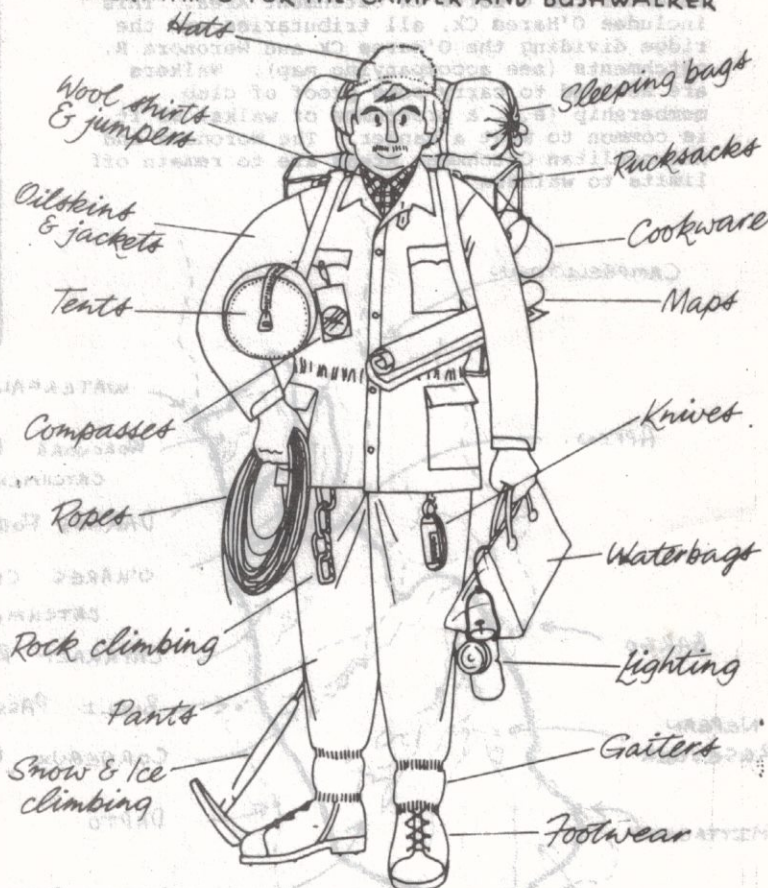
Some foods are inconvenient because they tend to leak and get through everything. Eggs and honey are the worst. Tomatoes bananas and butter also need careful treatment. Others go off after a while - for example, fresh meat can last anything from one to six days, depending on the temperature and how fussy you are. Its life reduces to twelve hours if the flies get to it. A few days can be added if you cook it well just as it begins to turn green.

The last consideration is cost. Cashew nuts taste great, contain just about every nutrient known to man, require no preparation and have an energy content of 23kj/g. One could easily live on them exclusively for weeks. However, their high price (\$8+ per kg) means that most people reserve them for occasional snacks. Freeze-dried package foods taste so-so, are reasonably nutritious, require cooking, contain about 15kj/g, and cost \$10.40 per kg. Also they are incredibly over-packaged - packages which you have to carry out. Yet Paddy sells them by the container load. Such is the power of advertising.

If you disregard such flack and choose your food as outlined above, it will cost \$1 to \$3 per day, depending how many little luxuries you take - almost certainly less than you spend on food at home. Buy in reasonably large quantities, best of all in bulk. Repack into plastic bags, M&B tins, etc if you have the time, both for convenience and to save weight, especially on the walk out. (I rarely bother though)

ACKO

EVERYTHING FOR THE CAMPER AND BUSHWALKER



WE'LL EVEN SHOW YOU HOW TO PACK IT ALL!

Paddy Pallin

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JUST DOWN FROM GEORGE ST
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55 HARDWARE STREET, MELBOURNE, VIC 3000 67 4845

BITS AND PIECES

LOST WATCH: A watch was found at Leaning Tree Saddle on the Southern Ranges Traverse (Tasmania) late in 1978. Contact J. Tedder, 43 Waite Road, Netherby, S.A. 5062.

ECOFEST: The New England University is running a series of weekend schools on the Environment. Classes are held at places such as Mt Kaputar NP, Macquarie Marshes, the Namoi River etc. People interested should

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