

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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FEDERATION REUNION

A belated notice for the annual Bushwalkers' Reunion:

Burning Palms — March 26-27

A weekend camp with a Saturday night campfire - bring your songbooks. Sunday competitions include billy boiling, tent pitching, damper baking.

More details from your Federation delegates or Joy Scott, 520-0750.

CONSERVATION PIECES

*During recent fires in the Lockleys Pylon — Mr Hay area a fire road was hurriedly pushed along the foot track from The Pinnacles towards Lockleys Pylon. At present very little is known about the road — where it goes, how far it goes, who is responsible for putting it in, etc. Reports from the NPWS indicate that in this area at least such a road will always be built if necessary — wilderness takes second place to fire control. Fortunately this road will be allowed, in fact encouraged, to regenerate. Nevertheless, Federation will be protesting.

By the way, anyone reporting developments like this is urged to give as much information as possible about the location and nature of what they saw. This will eliminate delays in finding out more, and greatly speed any action to be taken.

*The Tasmanian Lands Department recently issued a plan of management for the island's Central Plateau — a region approximately the length of the Cradle Mountain — Lake St. Clair National Park, and extending nearly 100 km eastwards. Most of the zonings allow for multi-use, since little of the area remains undisturbed anyway. Forestry interests and the Hydro-Electric Commission are very well established. There is, however, a buffer zone of near national park status adjoining the Cradle Mountain park and including locations such as the Walls of Jerusalem. The most disturbing feature of the plan is the fact that the Lands Department has zero powers of control. It has no way of enforcing its management concepts. If the HEC wants to build another dam, it can thumb its nose at the Lands people and go right ahead.

*Wollongambe Creek is still sometimes polluted by effluent probably coming from the sand quarry near Clarence. Several weeks ago, when the level was very low, the water was every bit as clear as could be desired. However in the last couple of weeks all watercourses have been running very full, and the 'Gambe has gone a murky grey-green. Other creeks in the area, such as Du Faur and Bell, are as clear as ever, which points the finger at something unique to Wollongambe. We'll be investigating further.

*The Premier, Neville Wran, is to be taken on a grand tour of the Blue Mountains region on 19th-20th March. This represents the first shot in the Greater Blue Mountains National Park campaign. The government has already declared that a large part of the Southern Blue Mountains will become a national park, but there is still a bit of the southern region plus the vastness of the entire northern region to go. Mr. Wran's itinerary is not finalised, but will include a flight over much the northern section and probably part of the southern section; a boat trip across Lake Burragorang; a short walk and overnight camp at Bats Camp; and a drive around to Kanangra Walls (where, incidentally, Federation will be holding a Search and Rescue practice). The weekend is being organised principally by the Colong Committee with assistance from Federation and NPA.

(Information from Dennis Rittson, Conservation Con-
venor, 95-6060).

NEW ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

Early in the New Year the NSW Environment Centre moved from its old premises in Broadway to much larger and more central location at 399 Pitt Street, just next door to the old Anthony Hordens Building. Federation has agreed to pay a sort of rental of \$8 per month, in return for keys to the Centre, storage space, accommodation for all meetings, plus access to the Centre's facilities (photocopier, duplicator, typewriters, telex, etc).

John Hibberd, manager, would be delighted to see bushwalking clubs use the Centre for meetings. Every dollar the Centre receives really means three, because of the Federal Government's two-for-one subsidy. Thus room hiring fees from clubs could be a real help to the Centre's finances.

SEARCH & RESCUE — SHOALHAVEN GORGE

On the weekend of 26-27th February a group of twelve scouts from the 1st Canterbury Venturer Unit, led by John Keyes, 28, walked into Shoalhaven Gorge via the Long Point track. The river was in a fairly serious state of flood following sustained widespread rain, although the weather was relatively fine over the weekend.

Late on Saturday afternoon one of the boys, Michael Becker, 16, was wading in the river shallows about 1 km below Barbers Creek when he was swept away by the current. He eventually reached the far shore about 400 m further downstream. Keyes told him to spend the night where he was, and that he would be rescued in the morning.

Next day at about 8a.m. Keyes left the other eleven boys at the camp and set off downstream to look for a safe crossing place. The boys suggest that he may have had ideas of reaching Badgery's Crossing (which was just as flooded as the rest of the river anyway) about 8 km downstream. He was not seen again.

When he failed to return the remaining Scouts went for help, and Marulan police arrived at the river at about 2p.m. Apparently with their encouragement, Becker re-crossed the river unaided and was hauled out unharmed. A search revealed Keyes' shirt, containing his watch and cigarette lighter, beside the river at a point where it flowed around an island a further couple of hundred metres downstream of Becker. Presumably Keyes removed his shirt etc. before trying to cross the river, intending to use the island as a halfway point.

The same afternoon a helicopter carried out a detailed search of the whole river between Barbers Creek and the stored water of Lake Yarrunga (Tallowa Dam). Although it made several passes up and down the valley at only a few metres above the water, it found no trace of Keyes.

On Monday a police team searched the north bank of the river between Badgery's Crossing and Barbers Creek but with no further success. The south bank was quite inaccessible, as the river was at least 6m about its usual level.

Federation's Search and Rescue was called in on Monday night, and 40 - 50 walkers arrived at Marulan Police Station at 7a.m. on Tuesday. It was agreed with the police to set up a base at Badgery's Lookdown, and to search the whole of the north bank between Barbers Creek and the stored water. Although the river had fallen 3 or 4 m, it was still deep, flowing very rapidly (about 10 km/h) and dangerous to cross without aid. No attempts were made to do so, although they may have been if lilos were available.

Thus eight parties of 4 or 5 walkers set off at about 9a.m., entering the gorge by various routes, and by 1a.m. the entire north bank had been carefully and unsuccessfully searched. In addition a large part of the south bank which was clearly visible across the river had also been checked, although in some places the banks were broad well-vegetated flats which could not be inspected without crossing.

By mid afternoon most search parties were back at base, and shortly afterwards continued on back to Marulan Police Station. The police very generously fed everyone with ample quantities of tea or coffee, steaks, and fruit salad. After the meal there was a brief, semi-formal discussion between police and walkers, in which it was generally agreed that further searching was pointless. The following reasoning was thought to be fairly conclusive:

Keyes had actually entered the river, as suggested by the discovery of his shirt. There are three possibilities as to what happened next:

1. If he had reached the far bank unhurt or with only mild injuries he would have had nearly 6 hours to return to Becker before the police arrived. As the distance was only two or three hundred metres, it seems unlikely that he did actually cross without serious injury.

2. He may have reached the far shore partially incapacitated. If he was conscious and able to signal, he would have been found by the helicopter. If not, he would almost certainly have died of exposure by Tuesday night, since he had nothing with him but shorts and boots. His lighter was left in his shirt. The weather was cool, with a light breeze and constant light rain on Monday and Tuesday.

3. He may have drowned in the river before reaching the bank.

The police arranged for a Navy helicopter to again search the river a week later, or after the river had dropped to a near-normal level, in the hope of finding Keyes' body. At the time of printing of this Newsletter, his real fate is unknown.

NAME CHANGE

The Sydney Bush Ramblers have changed their name to Sutherland Bushwalking Club. Their postal address still remains P.O. Box 250, Sutherland, NSW, 2232.

MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT NEWS

We have just received a shipment of "MOUNTAIN HOUSE" Freeze Dried Food Products. These are made in the U.S. and are world famous for their quality. There are:-

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(Granola & Raisins, Granola & Blueberries)

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SNACKS

(Ice Cream Vanilla, Chocolate, Strawberry)

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SNACKS	\$1.25

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P.S. If you consider buying a sleeping bag before Easter, now is the time to buy before prices go up.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hitting Softly

Dear Sir,

I feel I must comment on Ray Alsop's letter to Dunlop over the quality of their footwear.

While I agree the letter is forceful and to the point, and airs a much-felt grievance, I would dispute its format and language are in the best interests of the walkers who make up Federation.

It is important that we are seen as responsible people, and before 'slinging off' at anyone a thought should be given to the result, even if this may not be known for a considerable time.

We should realise we are a minority and as such are vulnerable.

However satisfying it might be to write a hard-hitting or even rude letter to someone who "deserves it", it is a well-known fact that hitting a bloke with a mallet may not always be the best method of winning him over to your way of thinking!

I know that the Committee give up their spare time to serve on Federation but I strongly feel that all members should be courteous if not polite to "outsiders", especially in letters which can give rather more offence than the spoken word.

We need support for aims like the Border Ranges National Park, and it's surprising where it comes from when it is needed!

Rod Andrews,
Lismore,
Kameruka Bushwalking Club.

Mountain Leadership Workshop

Dear Peter,

I was rather alarmed to read the comment published on the front page of February edition of the Newsletter, in relation to Mountain Leadership Workshops. The author is very belated in his criticism, particularly when one considers that the idea was first brought to the attention of Federation in October, 1976, and again in November and December, 1976, PRIOR to any practical plans being made for the Workshop. It is especially alarming to note that no criticisms were offered by any club representative present at those three meetings.

The author draws upon the critical views taken by the New Zealand Alpine Club, and the British Mountaineering Council, of Leadership Courses as a generalisation for objections. Had an enquiry been sought prior to the publication of this particular article, it would have been stated that the New South Wales course will follow the guidelines and standards set by similar Workshops conducted by the Appalachian Club in North America where the courses are primarily directed toward imparting knowledge of latest bushwalking skills and techniques (particularly in regard to First Aid, Clothing and Equipment, and Leadership Skills) and using Rock and Canyon as a glimpse into the sport, and not as a serious training programme, in order that persons who are diffident about their own capabilities on rope might assess it for themselves, and follow-up through a recognised club which practices the sport.

The Workshop makes no attempt to train people to lead bushwalking trips after only two days of instruction, and it would be rather foolish to think that this would be possible with inexperienced persons. It is being stressed to each participant that the course is only beneficial if it is 'followed up' through a recognised (Federation affiliated) bushwalking or climbing club.

The Courses of which both the New Zealand Alpine Club, and the British Mountaineering Council were highly critical were examined, and found unsuitable for use in New South Wales. One reason is that they offered certificates as a reward. The New South Wales course, following along the lines of the American course, does not offer certificates and I would oppose any move for their introduction. This N.S.W. course offers one thing — KNOWLEDGE. And not ability (as has been interpreted).

To offer criticism at this stage is to be belated for its planning and premature for its assessment and analysis.

A detailed report will be made available to Federation in time for its meeting of either June or July, 1977, after completion of the first Workshop, where Federation delegates will be asked to examine need and value and guidelines for future events of this nature.

It may be interesting to note that the response to this first Mountain Leadership Workshop is about 400% higher than envisaged. The maximum accommodation capacity is 48 persons. Over 120 applications were received, including block bookings by several Governmental Departments and outdoor education organisations, before the deadline of 1st March.

Peter Harris
Co-ordinator

First NSW Mountain Leadership Workshop

(There is no mention of the Workshop in the November or December minutes. The October minutes state, "NPA sponsoring mountaineering and leadership certificate (my emphasis) courses. Course includes walking and climbing advice and instruction. Aimed towards less experienced people than most bushwalkers." The Workshop as presented in Peter's letter appears to be a somewhat different and more acceptable concept than was presented by the original brochure and Federation's minutes. The principle of "follow-up" cannot be overemphasised; accordingly the title "Leadership" seems somewhat inappropriate. Ed.)

ON RECRUITING

Federation's PR officer, Ted Hartley, suggests that a good form of publicity for clubs in outer metropolitan and country areas is to arrange an exhibit at the local show. Mt Druitt Bushwalking Club has previously organised displays for both the Penrith and Blacktown shows, and have increased membership this way.

Shows are normally held in March or early April, and are organised by the local agricultural organisation. Ted's phone number is 622-2416 for clubs who want suggestions on what to display.

Ted also reports continuing high demand from new clubs for walks programs of established clubs. He will pick up programs from delegates at each Council meeting.

TRESPASS

The Publications Officer has been given a very interesting and relevant two-page article on bushwalkers, trespass and the law, originally published in the Melbourne Bushwalkers journal "Walk". We would like to reproduce it in this Newsletter, but feel that it should be checked and perhaps modified to agree with NSW rather than Victorian law. Is there a bushwalker-lawyer who feels able and willing to cast an expert eye over this short article and OK it for publication in NSW?

S & R FIELD OFFICER

The Search & Rescue Section's present Field Officer, Warwick Daniels, will shortly be going overseas for a few months. Taking his place will be Keith Maxwell, whose phone number is 692-2735 (w).

NEW MAPS

Wilf Hilder (Information Officer) reports that the following new maps have been released (all 1:25:000): Cessnock; Guy Fawkes River and Hernani; Growee (W. edge of N. Blue Mts); Campbelltown, Appin and Bulli.

Also recently published is the 1977 "Walk", from Melbourne Bushwalkers. Among many other things, it contains a complete list of Victorian bushwalking clubs, with addresses, and track notes on a number of Victorian walks, both of which could be useful to NSW walkers visiting Victoria.

CAMPING PERMITS

Royal National Park has changed slightly its system of camping permits. These will now be valid for one financial year (ie. July to June) rather than a calendar year. Anyone holding a 1976 permit will find it valid until June 30th, 1977.

MOULDS HUT

Following the destruction of Moulds Hut in the Snowy Mountains (reported last Newsletter) Canberra Bushwalkers have written to Federation seeking support in their opposition to any reconstruction. Although Federation's policy on huts in the Kocsiusko National Park officially opposes reconstruction of destroyed huts, the issue is being held over until Sydney Bushwalkers (who maintained Moulds) have been consulted.

COLO DAM

Federation has received from the Electricity Commission a reply to its enquiries on the rumoured dam on the Colo. The answer was evasive, although probably not deliberately. The Commission stated only that the Cox River, and not the Colo, would be used to supply cooling water to the new Unit 8 at Wallerawang Power Station. However the original rumour was that the Colo weir (to be built just downstream of the Wollemi confluence) was to provide cooling water for an entirely new power station planned for somewhere on the Newnes Plateau, not for Wallerawang. So we still don't know what is going on.

TRACKS & ACCESS CONVENOR

Pressure of studies has forced Ross Bradstock to resign from the position of Tracks and Access Convenor. His place has been taken by Len Newland of Sydney Bushwalkers. Len may be contacted on 43-2419 (w).

TROUBLE AT MARLEY

A Sydney Bushwalkers party including several beginners recently camped at Marley Beach in Royal National Park. Also camped at Marley were a bunch of yokels who did their best to make the SBW's weekend unpleasantly memorable. Violence did not actually erupt, but the unpleasantness went at least as far as threats of rape.

Marley is very difficult to police. This has happened before and will happen again. Marley is not a good place to camp, especially for small parties.

This Newsletter is usually published monthly and is distributed free, through the clubs, to all members of affiliated clubs. Mailing list subscriptions: \$3.00

All material not otherwise acknowledged can be attributed to the Publications Officer. Any opinions expressed are those of the individual authors, and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Federation.

The deadline for the next issue will be Thursday, 7th April, and it will be available at the Council meeting on Tuesday, 19th April.

Correspondence concerning the Newsletter should be addressed to the Publications Officer, who is:

Peter Tuft
11/30-32 Ethel Street
Eastwood, NSW 2122
85-7640 (h), 888-7227 (w)

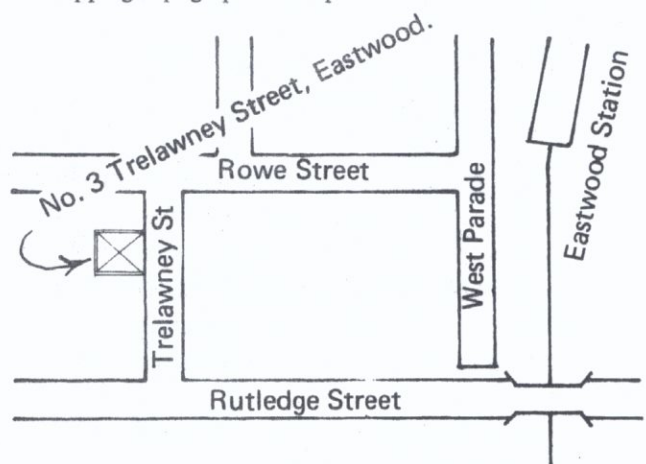
All other correspondence and membership enquiries should be addressed to the Secretary at G.P.O. Box 2090, Sydney, 2001. Telephone enquiries to Mrs Joy Scott, 520-0750.

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Agents for Lands Department and Division of National Mapping topographical maps.



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