

NEWSLETTER

of the

BUSHWALKERS OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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

ANNUAL REPORTS

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Bruce Vote

The last year of our activities was marked more for the recognition of our aims than the realisation of them. We were very active in publication and conservation and these could be expanded. But in other areas we have just reached an awareness of our responsibility and begun to formulate policy for future activity.

The newsletter has been regularly published and has achieved a wide distribution both inside and outside club membership. It has become accepted by walkers as a valuable information source and as a platform for debate on topical issues. It has done much to close the communication gap which many felt existed this time last year.

With several issues to our credit in May this year we made a successful application to the Paddy Pallin Foundation for financial support for future publications. Its form is still evolving and with this encouragement we are looking at expanding both circulation and size.

The conservation convener Ian Olsen formed a Sub-Committee early in the year which met regularly and considerably lifted our involvement in issues that affect walkers. We made submissions to Government on use of off-road vehicles and control burning. We acted swiftly on the N.P. & W.S. activities in Blue Gum Forest and have received assurances that such destruction could not happen again. An Easter trip to the Border Ranges was organised for about 50 walkers from several clubs. This was a great success covering both Levers Plateau and Wyangarie and through those who attended vastly increased the awareness of all walkers of the issues involved in the proposal for a National Park over the area.

The search and rescue section continued to provide a service to walkers and the public with Warwick Daniels as field officer. The first walk-in re-union for several years was held at North Era with a rewarding attendance by family groups. The Bushwalkers Ball at Petersham Town Hall was once again a valuable source of revenue as we hope it will be this year at Chatswood Civic Centre.

As for our objectives,

Firstly, in the field of publicity we feel there is room for improvement in relations with the press especially in cover of our search and rescue activities. Also on publicity we are now receiving a number of enquiries

about walking from the public and urgent work is required in preparation of follow up material. If the demands presently being put on our Victorian counterpart in this field are any indication this will expand rapidly.

Our guiding principle in this field is to attract walkers to clubs. We believe that it is to every walker's advantage to be organised, both in the short term through availability of information and companionship and in the long term through greater representation politically. With this in mind we have accepted a grant from the Paddy Pallin Foundation for sponsorship of bushwalks for senior high school pupils. These will be led by interested clubs, and should reduce the number of lost parties during school vacations as well as providing a source of club membership.

Secondly, we have started to streamline monthly meeting procedures by the distribution of committee reports and recommendations before the meeting. This should leave time for general discussion or guest speakers and strengthen the sub-committees.

Thirdly, we hope to expand our existing activities but in everything we are limited to manpower. If you're interested please don't hesitate to offer your assistance.

SECRETARY

Warwick Blayden

Reviewing the year's correspondence has revealed the following details. 430 items of correspondence were received and these included 78 enquiries re clubs and 7 enquiries re affiliation. Of these potential new clubs, three have now joined the ranks — Illawarra Bush Club, Napsac and Narrabri Bushwalking Club. The Canberra Alpine Club withdrew from the Federation as they felt their interests centred around skiing solely.

Of significance this year has been the number of overseas enquiries on walking. It reveals that there are a number of inadequacies in our sport, some of which lie directly with the Federation, but which are not being looked at. These inadequacies include things like suitable publicity brochures to be despatched to enquirers, and the fact that there are no weekday activities.

I would like to thank my assistant Joy Scott for her help in updating the membership list and keeping a record of office bearers, and her willingness to put her phone number to answer all enquiries.

PUBLICATIONS

Peter Tuft

The past year has seen the beginning of a Federation Newsletter. The idea is not new, as Federation's secretaries produced a regular monthly bulletin (a duplicated sheet) for at least a couple of decades up to the mid 1960's. Why this bulletin lapsed I don't know, but the reasons why it had to be resurrected as a more polished production are quite clear.

Twelve months ago, as most walkers know, Federation came dangerously near to a collapse resulting from a general lack of interest on the part of N.S.W. bushwalkers. It was obvious that an important factor in Federation's continuation was some means of ensuring that walkers knew of Federation's existence and activities. It was equally obvious that a regular Newsletter was the best solution to the problem.

In other words, the primary message of the Newsletter, even more important than the content of its articles, is the simple statement, "Federation is alive and well and working for N.S.W. bushwalkers."

How well is it succeeding? I have very little evidence, but I suspect that bushwalkers are in fact becoming more aware of what Federation is and what it does. For each of the many letters received because someone noticed the Newsletter, there must be dozens of people who also noticed the Newsletter but did not write. On this basis, we are doing well.

The first few months of the Newsletter were not easy — through the throes of establishing a method of production it wasn't possible to produce the Newsletter regularly. Now, though, with this last issue of Volume 1, the procedure is becoming routine. But one problem remains.

That problem is convincing contributors that a deadline is a deadline. Late contributions cannot be accepted, unless, as for this issue, there are so many that the whole issue is late. As I write this I cannot be sure, but there is a good chance that this issue will miss the Annual General Meeting by several days. The finality of a deadline cannot be overemphasised.

Annual reports are traditionally a time for thanks, and apart from all those who contributed (even the late ones!) thanks are particularly due to our advertisers, and to our printer, Ernest Spielmann of the University of N.S.W. Bushwalkers. His experienced advice at the beginning gave me the necessary knowledge with a minimum of difficulty; he printed the first few issues in his own time for nothing; and he continues to do the printing at a cost far below that which we would pay elsewhere.

Finally, let it be said that although the Newsletter is now well established, it must not be allowed to stagnate. Constant improvement is the only acceptable philosophy. It is still really only in its beginnings.

More annual reports next month.

SOUTH WEST JOURNEY

A new program of films on the Tasmanian wilderness

7.30pm on Friday 13th and Saturday 14th August, in the Law School Theatre, corner of King and Elizabeth Sts. Admission: \$2.00 (subject to confirmation).

Subjects include the Western Arthurs, Federation Peak, Port Davey, the Frankland River, and many other lesser known areas.

Films made by the Launceston Walking Club, and presented by the South West Tasmania Committee (N.S.W.).

**A NATIONAL PARK PROPOSAL:
THE SOUTHERN BLUE MOUNTAINS**

The Bindook Committee of the Total Environment Centre has recently completed a draft proposal for a Southern Blue Mountains National Park. The proposal is a grandiose concept, including most of the land between Wombeyan Caves and the Blue Mountains townships.

The authors of the draft divide the region into three areas, each of a different character. These are:

- i) Bindook, bounded by the Tonalli and Wollondilly Rivers, Jocks Creek, the catchment of the Werong Branch of the Abercrombie River, and the Murruiin Range.
- ii) The Blue Breaks, adjoining the northern boundary of Bindook and bounded on the remaining sides by Kanangra-Boyd National Park, the Cox River and Lake Burragarang.
- iii) The Wild Dogs/Jamison Valley on the north side of the Cox River, and extending north to Echo Point and Sublime Point, and east to the boundary of the existing Blue Mountains National Park.

In addition, the new proposal will absorb the two existing national parks in the area (Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd) as well as three State Forests (Erskine Creek, Mt Werong and Konangaroo — the latter is already committed for inclusion in the Kanangra-Boyd National Park.)

Very little of the area is freehold land. The proposal suggests that all private land be resumed and, with one exception, leased at peppercorn rentals to the present owners. The exception is Yerranderie, which is beginning to be developed in a way that many people feel is inappropriate. ie. an attempt at subdivision for private development. It is recommended instead that Yerranderie be preserved with development restricted to restoration. The town is ideally situated as a possible headquarters for the southern section of the park.

Most of the area of the proposal consists of Water Board catchment area. There is no reason why dedication as a national park would affect the land's value as a water catchment — look at the Snowy Mountains.

The proposal envisages that the Blue Breaks section would be managed as a core wilderness area, while the outer sections would be what Myles Dunphy called "tourist open areas". ie. areas in which a few picnic areas, roads, camping grounds etc. are allowed to exist. In this way the Kowmung/Blue Breaks wilderness would be protected by a buffer region to the north, west and south. To the east, of course, Lake Burragarang ensures complete isolation.

This management plan also permits vehicular access to the park from the north, west and south, although it is emphasised that the roads to Yerranderie from the Wollondilly should remain closed. Other roads that should be closed include the Scotts Main Range fire road, and the Narrowneck road (to be closed beyond the Golden Stairs).

The proposed park would be second only to the Kosciusko National Park in size, and the proposal claims that it would be the largest park in the world that is so close to a major city.

This proposal is only part of a huge Greater Blue Mountains National Park. The Colo Committee of the Total Environment Centre is working on a similar draft for the Northern Blue Mountains. When both proposals are quite complete it is anticipated that a campaign will begin to have the park dedicated.

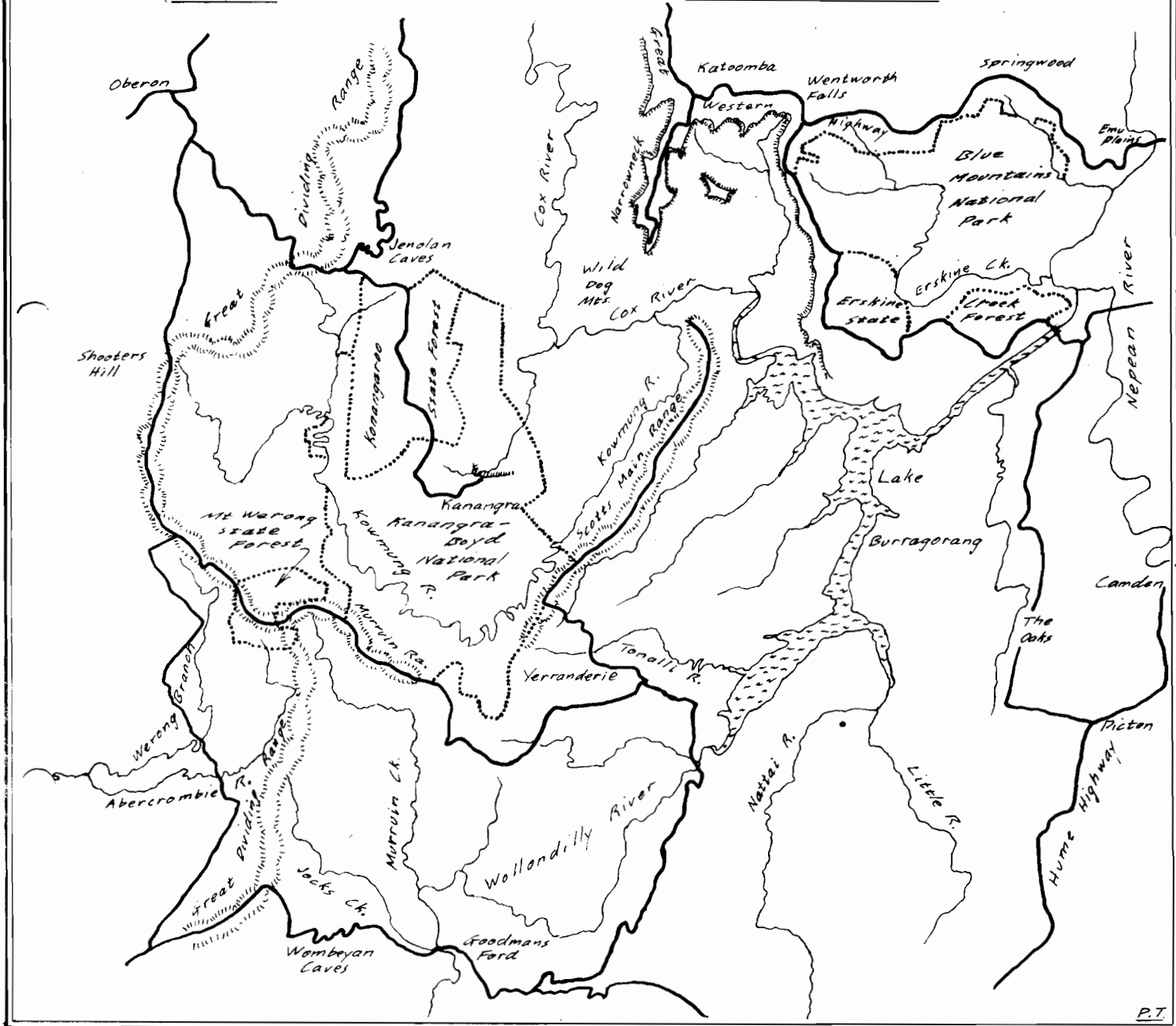
This will be a campaign that all walkers should support. As the Bindook proposal itself says, the Blue Mountains are the cradle of Australian bushwalking. They must still be the most popular walking area in N.S.W., if not the most popular in the whole country.

Southern Blue Mountains

Scale: Approx 1:500 000
(1cm = 5 km)

Selected Roads:

National Park and
State Forest Boundaries:



HELP REQUIRED

The Publications Officer (who is being presumptuous and assuming that he will be re-elected) requires someone (or a couple of people) who can carry Newsletter material to the city and/or Randwick area for typesetting and printing. This is important. If you can help please phone Peter Tuft on 888 7227 (w).

The winning entry in the Why-I-Go-Walking essay competition has been selected, but the decision was not made in time for this Newsletter. The winner will appear next month.

NEW MAPS PLANNED

Greg Hutchison of the National Parks Association Reserves Committee is compiling a series of bushwalking sketch maps to cover the southern section of the proposed Northern Blue Mountains National Park. Together with the existing "Colo" sketch produced by Bob Buck in 1973, the new maps will cover a roughly square area with Glen Alice just inside the N.W. corner, Clarence at the S.W. corner, Comleroy just inside the S.E. corner, and Putty a little north of the N.E. corner.

The three maps will cover, approximately, the Wollongambe, Wolgan and Wollemi catchments, and are named accordingly. They will correspond roughly to the new 1:25 000 topographical maps, although each sketch map will cover two of the Lands Department maps at half the scale (ie. 1:50 000). They are intended to complement rather than replace the topographical maps.

The compilers have asked for any information on tracks, routes, passes, campsites, names, and errors in the topographical maps. This is the sort of information which gives sketch maps their unique value. Any information may be sent as a written description with grid references, a rough sketch, or a photocopy of a map with added details. Contact Greg Hutchison on (02) 221 3430 (W) or through N.P.A., 263b The Broadway, Broadway, 2007.

INFORMATION REPORT

(Compiled from information supplied by Wilf Hilder, 622 3353)

* The Education Department is building a new school on bushland resumed from North Lawson Park. Any future expansion of the school will absorb more parkland. The development has the endorsement of the Blue Mountains City Council. Many people would rather see the park added to the Blue Mountains National Park, whose boundaries are presently undergoing a rationalisation.

* New Lands Department maps produced in the last 6 weeks or so (all 1:25 000): Catherine Hill Bay (including Fraser Park), Colo Heights and St Albans (these two together are equivalent to the northern half of the old St Albans (1:63 360 map), Genoa, Crookwell.

* Michael Brady's book on cross country skiing (second latest edition) is still available at Paddy Pallin's for \$4.00, instead of \$6.50 for the almost identical latest edition.

HYDRO-ELECTRIC COMMISSION

At the June Council meeting the following motion was proposed.

That the Federation inform the Tasmanian Government that it —

- a) Deplores the secrecy surrounding the Hydro-Electric Commission developments on rivers in South-West Tasmania;
- b) Demands a Royal Commission in to the H.E.C.;
- c) Demands a review of the H.E.C. Act.

Although it was felt by some that the motion was a little strongly worded, it was generally agreed that to mellow it would remove its impact. The motion was carried, nearly, if not wholly, unanimously.

OLDE BLUEGUM

The Conservation Committee would like to obtain any old photos of Bluegum Forest in the Grose Valley. It may be possible, by comparing aspects of this site such as vegetation, river width and river bank vegetation as shown in the old photo with the present state of the site, to make some positive statement about the impact of man here. In this regard, photos from the 1920's and 1930's would be particularly interesting.

If sufficient material of a useable nature comes to hand, and a study can be done, it is hoped the results could be published in a natural history or conservation magazine. Anyone who contributes photos could have a reprint of the study.

Anyone who can help in this regard can contact Charlie Morris, 663 4000 or Murray Scott, 520 0750.

AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

There are signs that the Federal Government may be at last beginning to at least partially honour its election promises on the environment. On July 7th it was announced that the remaining members of the Australian Heritage Commission would be appointed, and the Commission would begin to operate. Its main task is the establishment of a register of the national estate. The "national estate" consists of all natural and historical sites worthy of preservation. It will be determined by the Commission on the basis of submissions from both governments (Federal, state and local) and voluntary conservation organisations.

THE WHITES RIVER WOG

There seems to be some sort of stomach wog that spends the winters at Whites River Hut in the Snowy Mountains. I personally have experienced it twice, and know of several other people who have also come down with it after staying in the hut. The principal symptom, to put it delicately, is an inability to hold down one's food. The wog lasts only about 24 hours, and fortunately recovery is very quick. Nevertheless the indisposition is a nuisance — it takes the fun out of skiing.

So, a word of warning — either stay clear of Whites, or practice scrupulous hygiene and get your water from well up the creek.

1976 BUSHWALKERS' BALL

Friday, 17th September at the Chatswood Civic Centre, Victoria Ave., Chatswood

Two bands — folk and rock

Tickets: \$5.00 single, available from club secretaries, or contact Joy Scott, 570 0750 (day or night).

Fancy dress (if you like)

Supper is not included — bring your own food, drinks and glasses

N.B. All money owing to Federation is to be sent direct to the Treasurer at G.P.O. Box 2090, Sydney, 2001.

THE HIMALAYAS

Peter Marsh

Members of the Australian Garwahl Himalayan Party 1976 recently returned to Sydney after their unsuccessful attempt to climb Bethartoli Himal (20,840').

The party comprised Bob Ryan, John Atkinson and Peter Marsh from the Kameruka's, and Kevin Western, sometime member of Sydney Rockclimbing Club. Organised on the back of the proverbial post-card and very largely provisioned in India, the trip went very smoothly and was highly successful when measured in terms of the members' enjoyment, even though the principal objective was not climbed. The Party did succeed in climbing Bethartoli South (20,200') but heavy snow in the final ten days of the trip limited climbing and left the intended route on Bethartoli Himal subject to avalanche danger.

Having gone through the bureaucracy of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation to obtain permission to climb the peak, it was found that small lightweight groups could move about freely in the Garwahl, and climb, without permission and without the expense of a liaison officer the employment of whom is a condition for obtaining I.M.F. permission.

The scenery in the Garwahl is glorious and the area would be ideal for a walking trip even if no climbing was contemplated. The walk into the Trisul Nala, in which the Party had their base camp, is relatively easy unless snow conditions on the Duranshi Pass (14,500') are bad. The walk on into the Nanda Devi Sanctuary is considerably more difficult, however, and should only be attempted by experienced walkers.

Porters and load carrying goats are obtainable at Lata village provided that one takes the trouble to establish cordial relations with the chairman of the village council. Porters charged R.15 plus food per stage and half price for the return journey from base camp. The price for goats is negotiable with the goat wallah; the rate per goat per day depends upon how many goats one requires and for how long.

Maps of the area are hard to come by being classified by the Indian Government. However, there is a map of the Nanda Devi Area in the Sydney University Bushwalkers' Library, which is housed in the Geography Department Library at the University.

Food, with the exception of dehydrated foods, was found to be readily available in Delhi and also in Joshimath. Food purchased in Joshimath was either more expensive than in Delhi or of lower quality, however the purchase of food in Joshimath avoided transport problems.

Transport from Delhi is readily available and comprises a train or bus to Hardwahl, a shared taxi or bus to Rishikesh and then a bus through the spectacular Alakanda Gorge to Joshimath. The trip normally takes two days but if a night train is taken to Hardwahl and if a bus can be found to connect with the train the journey can be done in 24 hours.

A most worthwhile and enjoyable trip even if Bethartoli Himal remains a virgin!

NEW CLUB

The Illawarra Bush Club — a club that leads walks in the Illawarra and surrounding areas. The address is via the President, Michael Baker, WDE Box 72, Wollongong, 2506.

OUT OF THE PAST

Attached to the Federation's Bulletin of July 1951 (25 years ago) was a map of N.S.W. produced by the Wildlife Preservation Society. It showed all existing reserves of 1000 acres or more, together with many suggested new reserves. At that time, existing reserves constituted less than 1% of the state. I am not sure of the present figure, but it is not all that much greater. The accepted target figure is 5%, which must include samples of all important ecosystems. Progress is slow — perhaps too slow.

Among the suggested new reserves were some that sound familiar: a Victorian Alpine National Park (stretching from Baw Baw to north of Bogong); a "Sandstone Belt" National Park (seeming to stretch from the Wollondilly to the Hunter and from the Main Divide to the coast, with a gap to allow for Sydney); and a westward "extension of Queensland's McPherson Range Parks" (ie. the Border Ranges). Conservationists seem to be a tenacious lot.

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

The next issue will be available at the Council meeting on 17th August. The deadline will be Monday, 9th August.

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

Peter Tuft,
3/27 Tramway St.,
Rosebery, 2018
669 3872 (h) 888 7227 (w)

All other correspondence should be sent to the Secretary at the address on page 1. -

THIS MONTH MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT NEWS INCLUDES :

- *Excellent value in DOWN CLOTHING:
 - VESTS — \$21.70
 - DUVETS — sewn through with hood \$49.50
 - double construction with hood \$67.00
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