

THE Bushwalker



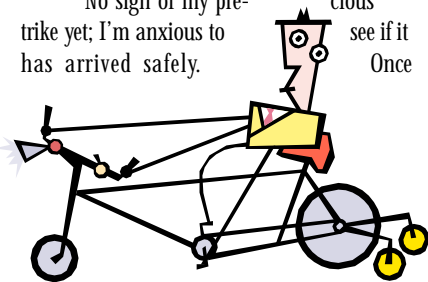
Magazine of the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs (NSW) Inc
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RIDING TO THE ROOF OF THE WORLD

Confederation's immediate past president, Brian Walker, relates his experiences as he cycles through West Bengal on an Australian-made Greenspeed recumbent tricycle. His goal is Darjeeling in the foothills of Kanchenjunga, the world's third highest mountain.

At last, I've made it! I am actually in India, sweltering in the humid air inside the arrival hall at Calcutta airport, surrounded by shouting Indians with enormous bundles wrapped elaborately in pink and blue plastic.

No sign of my precocious trike yet; I'm anxious to see if it has arrived safely. Once



past the immigration desk I try to avoid having my bag of film put through an X-ray scanner (I lost the argument.) As I approach the luggage carousel I see my trike sitting forlornly beyond it, the broken chain dangling limply from the chainwheel.

With perspiration pouring off me, I spend 15 frustrating minutes untangling the chain. It is wrapped tightly around the rear wheel. Finally I free it and manoeuvre the trike through the throng of curious Indians to Customs then out into the open car park. I'm wondering how the hell I am going to get the chain fixed. There are no bike mechanics at Dum Dum Airport.

To my enormous relief I spot a Hare Krishna devotee in an orange dhoti waiting for me. Two others join us and help wheel the trike to a van sitting in the blazing sun. It's like an oven, but beats by a mile the alternative of being stranded at the airport with an unrideable trike and no Indian currency.

At the Hare Krishna temple in Albert Road I am given a shabby guest room with adjoining bathroom. The squat toilet is on a raised platform in front of the window. The

window shutter is broken so anyone using the toilet is in full view of passers-by. In India nothing gets fixed.

But back to the damaged trike. On inspection I find that repairing the chain is fairly straightforward. Getting the gears to change properly is another matter altogether. I suspect the deraillleur has been wrenched out of true. I decide I'll have to contact home and ask my wife to fax me the instruction manual for the deraillleur as nothing I do seems to be fixing the problem.

Then the real frustration begins - trying to find someone who can send an e-mail message for me. All my inquiries are met with dumb incomprehension and shrugs. Finally I locate the operator of a computer who won't let me near his precious equipment, but grudgingly agrees to send my message if I write it down.

Several more hours are spent fiddling with the deraillleur, to no avail. Then my luck changes - I bump into an old friend who was once the Hare Krishna secretary for Australia years ago. As soon as he hears of my problem he escorts me back to the office, ousts the computer guardian and opens up the e-mail program himself. Success!

Unfortunately my friend is leaving the next day, but he tells me there is a bus on Friday to Mayapur where I know more people and expect to be more welcome than I am in the Calcutta temple. The bus has a roof rack that will hold the trike so I purchase a ticket. With my usual optimism I believe all my problems will be solved once I get to Mayapur.

The 160km trip takes more than three hours. The roads are packed with buses and trucks, and I am vastly relieved I am not cycling. The road surface is unbelievably bad. As the monsoon season is not yet over there is water everywhere and many areas are flooded - the Ganges is running a banker.

I finally arrive in Mayapur, hot, sweaty and somewhat scruffy, still wearing the clothes I left home in three days ago. I decide to send a fax to Australia just in case my wife doesn't

Continued on Page 8

BUSHWALKS IN THE PROPOSED FOREST RESERVE SYSTEM

by John Macris, Conservation Officer

The Carr Government was elected to office on a strong environmental platform. "Saving the old growth and wilderness forests" was a widely publicised commitment of Bob Carr.

It should be acknowledged that a good start was made towards achieving



what has been termed a *comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system*. Through 1995-96 a logging moratorium was placed over most of the old growth forests and identified wilderness in the east of the State while an initial assessment took place of areas likely to be needed for the forest reserve system. 120 million dollars of State and Federal money was allocated to industry adjustment, so as to allow the transition of jobs from native forest to plantation or other sectors.

Over the past year however there has been signs that the process has began to stall. Accompanying the September 1996 announcement of some initial forest parks and wilderness declarations, was a 10 year resource security undertaking for the industry, which meant if necessary wood supplies would be

Continued on page 6

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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.

Advertising rates are available on request. Ring John Clarke on (02) 9744-1916

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The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW Inc represents approximately 67 clubs with a total membership around 10,000 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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BUSHWALKING - A FIRST EXPERIENCE

Every weekend, hundreds of Australians take to the bush in search of peace, tranquillity and plain good fun.



A typical group of walkers enjoying a well earned rest

For many people, the experience of bushwalking is a longing that will not go away, and attracts the young and the old. Indeed, there seems no age barrier for this pastime as is evidenced by the many walking clubs in almost every city in Australia. I joined one such group recently, and gained a first hand account of the "bushwalking experience".

The Wayward Wanderers is a Sydney based group, headed by Michael Heffernan, in another life, an administrator for MMI.

Michael started walking as result of his decision to give up smoking. "It was either that or golf," he said, "I prefer walking, it's better for you, and you never lose!"

What motivates him to walk now is his desire to keep off the dreaded weed, the company of good friends, and just by chance, the Wanderers always seem to end their walking day in a cosy pub somewhere.

My trek with the Wayward Wanderers began at 8am on a crisp June morning, at the meeting point, the George IV Hotel at Picton.

This, as it miraculously turned out was also the finishing point, and thankfully, apart from refreshments, also heralded a much needed warm fire and soft armchairs at the end of a long day.

After one of Michaels special zinger tea brews, we were ready to hit the track, a leisurely hike of 16km or so down the Captain Starlight Trail to the

By Charles Silvestro
"The Wayward Wanderers"

Nattai River, where we would stop for lunch, then follow the river for a while to an obelisk known as Russell's Needle, before heading back upriver and to the civilised warmth of burning wood and brewed hops. It wasn't long before I found my place in the pack ; at the back.

We followed Michael like sheep, sometimes in single file, sometimes in pairs,

all the while watching our footsteps trying to minimise the damage to any foliage.

There are certain credos that are observed by bushwalkers, one of the most important is 'minimum impact'. There's nothing worse than a crowd of people all tramping through the bush squashing our native flora and breaking tree limbs. Most reputable clubs observe a set of 'rules' and the Wanderers is no exception.

The Wanderers for this trek were a friendly group of about a dozen or so, most with many walking trails already under their belt. And then there were those of us with only one or two walks experience, a category I fell into very obviously. My last walk of any consequence was at Christmas, when I had to park the car half a kilometre from the front door of the shopping centre. Still, as I adjusted my near new and very unused backpack, I knew this had to be good for me.

At regular intervals, one of the front walkers would stop and wait for the stragglers, and as we each filed past, he would do a head count to make sure no-one was left behind. It was reassuring to be with such a well organised yet very informal group. Organisation is something Michael says is for the birds. "This is just a group of friends walking," he says, "If I try to organise it too much, it becomes a business, with all the worries

of a business, we're just here to enjoy ourselves."

Indeed, the only 'organisation' Michael does is a regular flyer, sent out to those who request it about the next few planned walks. "I don't worry too much about who comes along, sometimes we get three people, sometimes thirty three," he said. Some of the Wanderers past walks have included Cradle Mountain in Tasmania, several two day treks in the Blue Mountains, New Zealand and an interesting 18 day hike in Borneo.

Today's trek paled into insignificance when compared with those .

By mid-morning, we found ourselves on a thin trail skirting the edge of a sharp drop.

Then, as if by magic, the beauty of the Nattai Gorge suddenly appeared to our right, the rising cliff face glowing in the sunlight.

We dropped about 450 metres from the top of the trail to the river in the valley below, the descent being spread over a few kilometres. Not that steep for experienced walkers, but one that took its toll on me on the way back up !

It was a welcome relief when Michael stopped the walk at a landmark called Hollow Rock.

Here we marvelled at the formation, gulped down some water, and regrouped for the final descent to the river below.

The next hour walking was a chance for me to catch up with some of the group and ask a few questions as to why anyone would want to do this bushwalking thing.

Their responses were predictable enough, and I soaked up their individual enthusiasm with great delight.

By 11am, we had reached our first full stop point, and finally we were able to release our packs, collapse on the soft grass on the river bank and soak up some sun, tea and biscuits.

The Nattai River is beautiful at this point, and seems an untouched paradise, a perception I felt attributed to the fact that the only way in to here is on foot.

Continued on Page 4

Personal Accident Insurance A very Personal Experience

In the Spring issue of The Bushwalker, Maurice Smith wrote an interesting article about Confederation's Personal Accident Insurance cover.

Well, I can report firsthand on the value of that cover. In October, while leading an NPA walk from Kanangra to Mt Cloudmaker, I slipped and broke my left ankle. We were lucky that another walking party in the area had an analogue mobile phone, with which to call for help. As many walkers with digitals will know, they don't always get a signal from Kanangra Tops.

Two hours after the call an SES crew and



a paramedic from Oberon arrived on the scene. It was decided it would be much too difficult to stretcher me out through the heath, so the Care Flight Rescue helicopter was called in.

Now these things are not cheap and if you think it's all done for nothing, think again. The Ambulance Service do bill you for the evacuation. In my case it was \$1,228.

I was not covered by a private health fund, nor did I have ambulance cover. So the three dollar investment I made when I renewed my NPA membership last August worked out to be a pretty good one. Not only has it covered the cost of the helicopter but also my on-going physiotherapy. Although it wasn't necessary for me, the policy also covers things like loss of income. I wasn't doing anything particularly difficult when I suffered my injury. It's the type of thing that could happen to anyone, anywhere. If such a small cost can save you anywhere between three and five thousand dollars it's got to be one of the best deals going.

Continued from Page 3

Michael wasted little time in shuffling us back to our feet, for stage two of this walk, the quest to find Russell's Needle.

This was the point where he took out the salt shaker, and declared, "be alert for leeches!"

We all protested strongly that he never mentioned anything about leeches until now.

"Didn't I, I meant to." he said with a cheeky grin, and turned upriver with a cheery "Wagons Ho!"

The walk along the river bank was glorious to say the least, clear, smooth flowing water, wonderful rock formations and some beautiful floral displays. We all kept a special lookout for platypus, but sadly, none were found. Soon, we were amongst the thick of it, mixing it with the real bush. Michael had led us into some heavy scrub, and had lost the trail. Sensibly, he stopped us there, while he went ahead to try and pick it up again. Again, another chance for a breather, some more water, and a quick photo session.

At that point, we heard the familiar sound emanating from the bush, "Cooee, Cooee"

Ah yes, no matter where you go in this great country, you can always depend on that sound.

Michael had found the trail, and we pushed on towards his call.

We walked for another hour before he called a halt for lunch, in a nice area on the bank of the river, still some kilometres from Russell's Needle.

It seemed that objective would be unobtainable today, as Michael calculated that this would be about as far as we could go in order to make it back comfortably before dusk.

I was impressed by his ability to keep a constant eye on all things, the trail, the weather, the distance, the terrain, and the first timers like me, not bad for someone who says he doesn't organise anything.

Lunch was a chance to reflect in the days walk so far, and for me, to think about the walk back. . . . And up, it wasn't the most pleasant thought at the time. Most of the group had come well

prepared for a bush lunch, some had fruit, some had sandwiches, and some had caviar.

Above all, each was well equipped to enjoy the day, in the company of great friends.

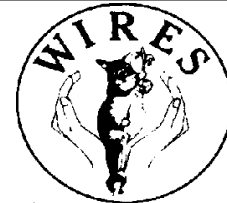
And this seemed to me to be the overriding theme in this adventure,

Bushwalking, a must to experience at least once in your life, and to love for the rest of it.

in great company, good food, a beautiful country, perfect weather, what more could we want.

Bushwalking, a must to experience at least once in your life, and to love for the rest of it.

There are numerous bushwalking clubs scattered all over Australia, I'm certainly going to keep at it, but a hint for first timers, start with the easy ones, take plenty of water, some fruit to eat, and above all, enjoy!



LET NATURE FEED ITSELF

The foods we sometimes feed wildlife are like 'junk food' - animals and birds might seem to enjoy, but they can actually be causing harm. For example, milks and sugars can cause severe diarrhoea and dehydration.

When birds or possums feed regularly in our neighbourhood they learn to depend on us and they can lose their feeding skills in the wild. Their search for the right food and shelter is a question of survival - it's when everything they have learnt matters most.

Even feeding lorikeets from a single bowl can transmit psittacine 'beak and feather' disease. This deadly disease stops the feathers growing and deforms the beak and claws. It means the bird is unable to fly, and can suffer a slow death by starvation or feral attack.

As you can see, when people interfere with nature even if they think they're doing the right thing, things can go wrong. Our message is simple

**LET NATURE FEED
ITSELF.**

ALONG THE TRACK



Alex Tucker Tracks & Access Officer

1) BLUE MOUNTAINS CROSSING WALK

I have had no formal response to the advertisement in the August issue for an Honorary Project Officer. However some of the four proponents of the possible options seem prepared to act jointly if this is necessary.

Meanwhile the Conservation Alliance has advised that our submission was included in their short list for funding but was unsuccessful as available funds were sufficient only for one project in each state. However they asked us to try again this year and are ready to discuss the details of our project before we submit an application.

Our next step is to advise Bob Debus MP for Blue Mountains of the situation and ask him to convene a meeting of the two Councils, NPWS and DLAWC to decide if the Project should proceed. At a previous meeting with Confederation representatives, Mr Debus had indicated that he would consider this action at an appropriate time.

2) WARRINGAH PITTWATER COASTAL WALK

Stage 1 of this walk was a Bicentennial Project resulting in the construction of linking tracks between the beaches between Dee Why Head and Mona Vale Head and tracks around Bilgola South Head and Bangally Head linked by some road walks. If the January Confederation meeting agrees, we will be advising Pittwater Council that Confederation would like to see the walk

completed to Barrenjoey Head and suggesting that they seek funding from the Centenary of Federation Committee. I recommend that our preferred option should be a route without road links. This will not be easy to achieve.

Maps such as Mona Vale and Broken Bay 1:25 000 and in street directories show Recreation Reserves extending almost continuously between beaches. However, in several places the boundaries of private lands extend almost to the cliff edge and the Reserve at these "pinch points" is mostly at the rock platform 50 metres below. Even where there is 2 metres or more of reserve at the top, geotechnical consultants have advised Council of high risks of eventual cliff collapse due to wind caves.

Purchase of even small areas of private property would be expensive, but this is one option that we will ask Council to consider, along with new track construction or stairways or even (horror) safety rails, near pinch points.

I would appreciate reader's comments on this submission to Council, so that we can, if necessary, demonstrate bushwalker's support for the completion of the walk,

POST BUSHFIRE FAUNA SURVEY

I was contacted in January by the leader of a WIRES group who were conducting a fauna survey in the Cole area. They had CMA maps but had been advised that Bob Buck's map would help them identify safe and suitable locations for sampling. I soon confirmed my impression that the map had been out of print for many years and that the only hope was to find someone who was prepared to get his own copy photocopied. Most of the likely people were away from their phones and in the meanwhile WIRES had found such a Person through another channel. I was able to pass on to them the caution from several of my contacts that some of the passes that Bob classified as "Simple" were found to be "Formidable" by experienced walkers or almost impossible without ropes and associated hardware.

CONGRATULATIONS

PETER

The Confederation of Bushwalkers NSW would like to congratulate Peter Treseder on his latest achievement.

On 1st January 1998 (AEDT) Peter



Peter treseder

Treseder, Ian Brown and Keith Williams completed the first unassisted trek to the South Pole by Australians.

They started their 1400km journey at Berkner Island and arrived 60 days later after rising 10,000 feet and averaging approximately 22km/day. The starting weight of their sleds was 150kg each. Their diet consisted of a calorie intake of 6,500 per day made up of soup, pasta, museli, chocolate etc, plus a high fat biscuit made up for the expedition by Arnotts, one of the major sponsors of the trip. All three suffered frobite, Ian being worst affected and requiring injections and daily dressing of the wounds on his inner thighs. This crossing by these brave Australians shows us that there are still some challengers waiting out there for man to overcome.

Peter is the leader of the Confederations rock squad rescue team, and was recently awarded with his 25 year medal for services rendered to the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association.

walks of varying degrees of difficulty:

North East Region

Doyles River State Forest - View the area from Mt Seaview off the Oxley Highway. Explore the rainforests and eucalypt forests of Fenwicks Creek in a proposed wilderness area.

Enfield/Riamukka State Forests

- observe unlogged tableland hardwoods. Walk into remote rivers like Mummel and Rowleys Rivers.

Myall River/Bulladelah

State Forests - make a side excursion to these forests as part of a trip to Myall Lakes.

Southern Region

Benandarah/Termiel State

Forests - east of the Princes Highway between Tabourie and Batemans Bay. These are long standing proposals (more than 40 years) for inclusion in Murrumbidgee National Park.

Dampier State Forest -

Contains the largest contiguous area of rainforest in the south of the State. Parts are proposed for addition to the Deua Wilderness and National Park.

Buckenbowra/Monga

State Forest - An area of pure streams, wet escarpment forests and a habitat link between Deua and Budawang National Parks.

Badja State Forest - part of an identified wilderness centred on the rugged Trosser River. Together with the previous area would complete the linked reserve system in the southern ranges as a continuous protected area from the

Illawarra to the Victorian Border.

The third region is upper north east which is more than 5 hours travel. Information is available for those interested in making a longer trip to the far north.

To discuss these or other areas as potential places for your walks program, please contact me on the number listed under office bearers on page 2.



Myall Lake National Park - Photo courtesy Webster Publishing

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COOKERY CORNER



Richard Thompson NPA

As a long time Bushwalker and NPA Walks Leader, Richard prefers to spend his time around the camp fire watching others cook. His ideal, no nonsense meals are all pre cooked and heated over the campfire!

Starters: Sui Min Pot Noodle

Heat as per instructions

Main: 'Cook in the Can' Curry

Tom Piper Sweet Curry

Heat as per instructions

Desert: Pot of fruit salad (any brand)

Wine: Vintage 'Chullora' Individual cask red!

Phil Patterson

Kowmung Curry

Rice or pasta

Small tin red salmon

Small tin coconut cream

Lemon grass

3 cloves garlic

Tablespoon fresh sliced ginger

Sliced red capsicum

1 teaspoon Green Thai Curry Paste

Fresh cut coriander

Boil rice pasta for 10 mins. Mix all other ingredients in separate pot and stir until well blended adding salmon last to prevent breaking. Serve over the pasta.

Thanks Richard and Phil.

Walk Safely - Walk With a Club 

From page 1

check the e-mail for a few days. After visiting numerous offices I finally find someone who agrees to send my fax - then the power goes off! Why am I surprised - after all, this is India.

While waiting for a reply to my messages I decide to go for a walk. All the low-lying land around the temple is under water, the once-beautiful temple garden is a muddy swamp. There are birds everywhere - white egrets wade among the reeds, a large hawk or eagle perches on a tree behind the restaurant. This morning the air is filled with the sounds of doves and bulbuls.

Food, as usual, is plentiful. Breakfast costs me about 50c; lunch and dinner are free. Rice is accompanied by dahl with two or more vegetable dishes and a pakhora, followed by a Bengali sweet, fresh fruit or sweet rice.

I am persuaded to remain in Mayapur until September 12 when a number of people who live along my proposed route will be here for the Radhamastami religious festival (in celebration of the birthday of Krishna's consort, Rhada). I am to meet them and arrange where and how to contact them.

The anxiously-awaited instructions

To page 10

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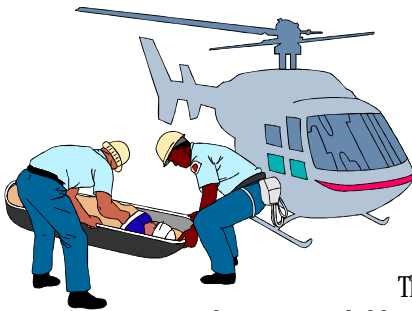
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THE BIG PICTURE

Rescue in NSW has you as a worker for Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue (BWR) part of a major community resource. BWR is just one of the many squads of the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association Inc. (VRA). BWR is the specialist Bush Search & Rescue group of the VRA with accreditation from the State Rescue and Emergency Services Board.



The VRA is a recognised Statutory Body like the State Emergency Services or The Rural Fire Service (Volunteer Bushfire Brigades). The majority of its squads are country based principally as road rescue squads but there is also a large marine area. Why not look at the list of squads attached to this article? There were many VRA Squads who assisted in the Thredbo landslide rescue of July 97. These squads were co-ordinated by the VRA Director of Operations and reported directly to the Police Officer In Charge (O.I.C.) of the rescue. On Wednesday 3rd December, 1997 the VRA was called out to assist in the overall State bushfire emergency as they were in the 1994 fires. It is not uncommon to combine several squads for lesser emergencies such as the Nyngan floods. So that makes me just a slightly bigger cog in a powerful community service organisation. So feel proud of being a part of the VRA as one of the workers for Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue.

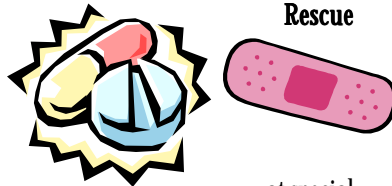
SEARCH & RESCUE CALENDARS

This pocket size (rucksack portable) little gem is out again. It has lots of valuable information such as Confederation and S & R activity dates, Public and School Holidays, Full Moons and how to contact your own self help rescue section of the Confederation - Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue. Copies have been sent to your club. Get one of these little gems to-day.

Keith Maxwell
DIRECTOR,
Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue.

A BOX OF BANDAIDS AND A COUPLE OF 'ASPROS'

If this describes your comprehensive First Aid Kit then you haven't done an accredited First Aid course as offered by Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue



at special discount rates for walkers. All conscientious trip leaders should have at least a Senior St John First Aid Certificate (or better). First Aid training is worth having for its ability to save lives in all sorts of situations (not just for bushwalks). All bushwalkers available for Search & Rescue Callouts should have a Certificate or be soon to do it.

Wilderness Rescue is running a Senior St John First Aid course on 30th/31st May. Another course will also be available on the last weekend in October (24th/25th) if you are unable to attend this course. Club Walks Program Secretaries please note to pencil in the last weekend of May and October 1999 for

similar First Aid courses.

Bookings are essential and can only be done in May. The venue will be confirmed with your booking. A \$20 non refundable deposit will complete the booking but should not be sent until you have ascertained that there is a place for you by contacting our Instructor and First Aid Training Co-ordinator -

Mr David Sheppard at home on (0242) 26 6565

Unless you are on your clubs list of bushwalkers available for Search & Rescue Callouts then the total cost will be \$80. The additional \$60 is to be paid on the morning of the start of the course. For bushwalkers on the Callout list the total is \$60. To prove that you are on your clubs list you will need a brief note to accompany your deposit from your Club Search & Rescue Contact. We know who they are when we need them but don't ask us who is your Club Contact as the course cost may go up over \$80!

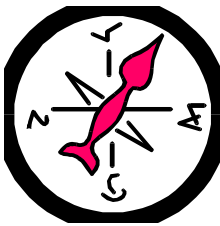
OTHER COURSES - The St John "Remote Area First Aid" course run by Confederation is a more detailed course that takes either 3 or 4 days over two weekends. These are run several times per year but not on fixed dates each year as per the above course. Contact the Instructor for dates and bookings. This course is often taught mid week (often by our Instructor). Bookings for mid week courses must be done through the Sydney Office of St John Ambulance in Surrey Hills. If you have sufficient people interested in doing either course in your club a special course could be arranged on an appropriate weekend. Go back to page 1 of 'The Bushwalker' and start reading all over again if you cannot think of whom to contact.

ROGAINE 98

It's time to start planning your clubs' Rogaine teams. As usual the site is a secret for as long as possible. Sometimes its even a secret from us as we have been unable to confirm the site until very close to the event. This year it may not be north of the Harbour Bridge but then again the possible site isn't confirmed yet.

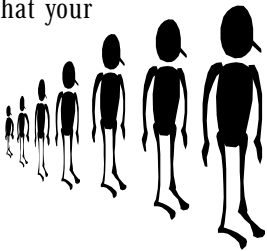
An aim of the Rogaine is to encourage navigation training by bushwalking clubs and other emergency services. Thus the course is set up to be straight forward. Checkpoints are always set in obvious places such as the top of hills or creek junctions. There is a choice of either the one day or overnight event. Everyone starts together but returns by 7pm Saturday night or 2pm Sunday.

TRAINING - This is a great opportunity to train members in navigation. In my club I regularly hold a navigation training day prior to the Rogaine. The beginner navigators then enter the one day event on their own for some concentrated practice and usually end up around midway of the results. This gives them a tremendous confidence boost.



If you cannot navigate you are really a follower still learning the craft of bushwalking. I am never a passive follower always taking an interest in where a bushwalk is going as I have seen too many blunders.

LEADERSHIP - If you have large numbers on bushwalks it could be that your club has a shortage of leaders and not that they all greatly love the area. Why not get



together a mixed team(s) of trainee leaders and experienced leaders. The trainee should do the lot; i.e. navigation, route selection and monitoring of progress (that may require changing of plans). The experienced leaders should provide a confidence boost but not take over unless something goes badly wrong. A debrief should be held after the Rogaine for the trainee to discuss how to lead better in the future.

FOOD - This is available at the end of the day. So when you return tired and hungry there is a hot meal and drink just waiting for your cup and plate. You can then do some serious socialising with the other bushwalkers present as you all wait for the presentation. We try to do the presentation no later than 90 minutes from the finish time. So when you head home you know your results and will probably be discussing how to do better in 1999.

So why not start planning your teams. The Rogaine is always on the last weekend of June so this year it will be on 27th / 28th. The entry forms will be sent to all bushwalking clubs around late April. The one day teams must be 2 to 4 persons while the limit on two day teams is 4 to 6.



Now since this is just a variety of either a one day or two day bushwalk you must carry adequate equipment. Overnight teams must have sleeping bags and tents or tent flys. You can make the event as hard or as easy as you like but you must stay together as a team. Close to the event the details of the location will be sent to you. When you register at the event you will receive the necessary 1:25,000 map.

I trust that your club makes the most of our 10th (yes) Annual Emergency Services Rogaine. See you there.

Continued from Page 9

arrive and I adjust the derailleur properly. To my consternation this does not entirely solve the problem. Riding is possible, but there is a disconcerting series of jerks and loud crashes from the cogs that is a quite alarming. Deciding some oil may help, I study my Bengali phrase book and discover the magic words: saikel tel (cycle oil). After a long search I finally obtain some oil, but it makes little difference. Perhaps the stiff links will loosen up once I get out on the road - I'm certainly not going to stay here for weeks until a new chain arrives from Australia.

National Highway 34 - the main road to Darjeeling - is no more than a series of potholes linked together by patches of fractured bitumen. I soon realise the trike and I are in for some punishing riding. Yesterday while inspecting the road I was accosted by an old man who said, in beautifully enunciated English: "Excuse me, Sir. I make my living by begging. Could you please make a small contribution? Any small amount to suit your convenience would be satisfactory."

In a quiet backwater I see a couple of ferries picking up people wanting to get to the opposite side of the river. The boats have flat decks on which the passengers, many with bicycles, stand precariously. They are powered

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 **Air Niugini**

by inboard diesel engines. Beyond the backwater the river is racing, big bunches of water hyacinth and other debris flying along. I am impatient to start my ride and get away from the frustrations involved in getting even small things done. Just finding some glue to seal my letters before posting them was an amusing but trying experience. I meet the people who have agreed to provide support along my route to Darjeeling.

At 7.30 in the morning I leave without fanfare and am on my way. The minor roads are crowded with rickshas, bicycles and oxcarts, but no trucks and buses. The sight of my trike causes great excitement wherever I go - men fall off their bicycles or collide with one another while gaping. An old man peeing against a wall turns around and almost sprays me as I pass. Children dance and shout and run after me, their eyes and teeth gleaming in their excited brown faces.

The humidity is awful. Once the sun is up I am constantly dripping with sweat. Although the road is almost flat, with my heavy load I can manage only about 15-20 kph. The road surface is appalling - at times so bad I have to ride a slalom course between the biggest holes. Pot-holes filled with water are the worst - there's no way of knowing how deep they are until a wheel disappears beneath the surface and my head is almost jolted off my neck.

The traffic and road surface are worst in the towns. Here the potholes are like bomb craters. The attention I get is amazing - policemen halt all traffic to let me through, people stop what they are doing and rush to the roadside, calling out and waving.

Some towns consist almost entirely of roadside truck workshops - mechanics, auto electricians, motor body builders and so on all have stalls beside the road. The combination of dreadful roads and ancient vehicles ensures they have plenty of work. Broken-down trucks are a common sight along the road, their drivers tinkering with the engine and parts spread around in the dirt. I've seen some spectacular wrecks where trucks have run off the road, probably when the driver fell asleep. Although the traffic is very heavy I have not yet had any serious problems. Most buses and trucks give me a wide berth, the buses slowing right down so the passengers can have a good look as they pass.

The most striking feature of the scenery is the water everywhere - ponds, streams, canals and floodwater in every direction. Rice and jute are grown in the water, the latter a tall straight-stemmed plant with a few leaves on top. The stems are bundled and soaked in ponds to soften the bark before it is stripped off by hand.

After cycling 108 km on my first day, I find a likely camping spot beside a large pond in a patch of forest. As soon as I stop I have an instant audience of local people who watch intently as I pitch my tent, have a meal and go for a pee. They finally drift away once it is dark and I crawl into bed. In the middle of the night I am awakened by incredibly heavy rain, followed by loud peals of thunder followed by lightning so bright it shines red through my closed eyelids.

After about three hours the storm fades into the distance, and I fall asleep. When I wake I feel as if I am lying in a waterbed. I

realise that the pond has risen and my tent is practically floating in about 4cm of water. Fortunately I remain dry as I alternately cat-nap and check the rising water level for the rest of the night. Just after dawn I hear voices outside - exclamations of concern and shouts to others still at some distance. When I peer through the flap I see a row of pink toes and brown legs - my audience of the night before has re-assembled.

Their amazement that the inside of my tent is still dry is truly comical. They recover enough to help me move the tent to higher ground. Later they watch my every move as I pack my gear and sodden tent. Many willing hands help push the trike through the mud back to the main road, then wave a cheery goodbye.

Big piles of harvested grain are spread on the road surface to dry, creating another hazard for the unwary traveller. Occasionally I meet teams of ponderous buffaloes plodding along the highway, treating blaring horns with disdain. Motor cyclists love to ride up beside me and shout questions in a weird mixture of Bengali and English: "Where you coming from?" (meaning what country). "Where are you going?" When I reply to Darjeeling, they almost fall off their bikes in astonishment.

I love to stop at the frequent roadside tea stalls and have several cups of tea. It is served in small glasses and is sickly sweet but refreshing. Some tea stalls are resting places for truck drivers, with rope beds and hand pumps where they can wash. In a few more days I'll reach Darjeeling; it should be cooler there.

Continued next issue

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March	8th- Metrogaine-6hr Sydney Metro	17th Confederation Meeting	28th-29th Search and Rescue Training weekend	28-31 Easter Willow Edadication weekend - Kowmung
April	4th Autumn 12/24 hour Rogaine	18th-19th & 25th Remote area First-aid	21st April Confederation Meeting	
May	16th-17th & 23rd Remote area first-aid	19th Confederation Meeting		
June	14th Paddy Pallin Rogaine	16th Confederation Meeting	20th-21st & 27th Remote Area First-aid	27th-28th Confederation's rescue Services Rogaine
July	18th 19th & 25th Remote Area First-aid	21st Confederation meeting		
August	8th-9th NSW Rogaine Championships North of Maitland	18th Confederation Meeting	22nd Confederation AGM at Newcastle	15th-22nd Great Grose Gorse Walk
September	5th Lake Macquarie Rogaine	15th Confederation Meeting	18th Confederation's Ball/Bush Dance	19th-20th & 26th Remote Area First-aid
October	17th-18th & 24th Remote area First-aid	20th Confederation Meeting		
November	8th Upside-down Rogaine	17th Confederation Meeting	21st-22nd & 28th Remote Area First-aid	
December	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 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. Phone (02) 9548-1228 Any member of any club may attend meetings of the Confederation.

BOOK REVIEW

Reviewed by Andy Macqueen
Confederation's historian

'WILD PLACES: Wilderness in Eastern New South Wales'

Text by Peter Prineus, photography by Henry Gold, 288 pages, published by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Limited, 1997. Retail price \$34.95

A great deal of water has plunged through the wild gorges since the first edition of 'Wild Places' was published in 1983. The Wilderness Act has come into being and wilderness areas have been declared in accordance with it; there has been more debate on many wilderness and biodiversity issues; the Wollemi Pine has been discovered; and the Mabo decision has thrown out the notion of Australia as a Terra Nullius. Perhaps most importantly, we have progressed from a time when the wilderness movement was riding on a growing wave of support, to the present climate of organised and vocal opposition to wilderness.

It is thus timely that a second edition of 'Wild Places' should make its appearance.

The first edition quickly became a desirable adjunct to any wilderness lover's bookshelf—or coffee table. It was a handsome, hard-covered volume filled with magnificent black-and-white wilderness photographs. But it went far beyond that: it contained a wealth of information, firstly on the philosophy of wilderness and, secondly, on the geography and history of the 22 wild places it discussed. However, so formidable was that wealth of information, presented on large pages with long lines and countless words, that I suspect only a handful of ardent wilderness philosophers and historians read it from cover to cover.

In the second edition the emphasis is on the text rather than the photos. It has a smaller format, with a soft cover, and there are fewer photos. Also, the photos are necessarily smaller and their quality has suffered slightly from a reduction in contrast. On the positive side, the book costs less than it would if it had retained its former attributes.

If all this means that the second edition is more likely to be purchased for the value of its text instead of its beauty it might be a good thing, for we seem to be at a something of a cross-roads with regard to the future of wilderness in this state. It behoves us all to be thoroughly informed about all the matters involved.

The first fifty-odd pages are devoted to the same well-researched and argued dissertation on the philosophy of wilderness as appeared in the first edition, substantially edited and updated in places. With an excellent reference list and presentation of alternative views, the many historical perceptions of our wilderness are discussed, and a detailed account is given of the arguments and battles for wilderness preservation. There is new discussion on issues like biodiversity, fire history, and the significance of the Mabo decision.

Not everyone will agree with all the arguments. However, to the extent that the author has acknowledged the alternative views, the work is balanced.

The bulk of the book is devoted to a detailed account of the 22 wild places presented in the first edition, plus five 'Further Areas'—the Nattai, Grose Valley, Border Ranges, Kaputar and Coolangubra. The material on the former has been updated, mainly to take

account of events since 1983, but there appears to have been little revision of most of the material—unfortunately perhaps. For instance, the section on Kanangra could have done with some updating in the light of the recent publications by Jim Barrett. As for the 'further areas', it is not clear why they should have virtual footnote status in the book. If they deserve to be regarded as wild places as much as any of the other 22, why are they simply not slotted in with the rest?

Without wading deep into the text it is difficult to see which of the 27 areas, or which parts of them, have now been identified or declared under the Wilderness Act. This is understandable, bearing in mind that the book does not pretend to be a guide to declared wilderness areas. However, I think an additional chapter in which currently declared areas were listed and cross-referred to the 27 wild areas would have been helpful—the reader could then more easily appreciate just 'where we are at' with wilderness. Similarly, it would be instructive if the sketch maps in the book showed the gazetted boundaries of declared wilderness areas.

In conclusion, the original 'Wild Places' was valuable both for its text and its inviting beauty. This second, less costly edition has lost some of the latter, but it remains the only comprehensive written work promoting wilderness in this state. I am inclined to the view that, with the passage of 14 eventful years, the book might have deserved a more extensive overhaul. However, it is a fine piece of work, and if you missed out on the first edition I strongly recommend you buy the second. And read it.

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