

THE Bushwalker



Magazine of the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs (NSW) Inc
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GROSE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL DEFEATED

Bushwalkers will be pleased to know that the Canyon Colliery site, some 900 hectares of undeveloped ridge at the head of the Grose Valley, has been officially returned to the Blue Mountains National Park (from which it was excised in 1967) on 3rd March, 1999. This move has protected the area from vast and inappropriate development proposed by the Earth Sanctuaries company. Dr. John Wamsley, from South Australia, heads the company, recently listed on the Stock Exchange. Unfortunately he thinks that a large asset backing should have given him the right to acquire any parcel of

Thais Turner

Bankstown Bushwalking Club

to expire in 2005 and the 50 ha of degraded area on which buildings now stand is to be rehabilitated and the built structures removed.

Granting extension of the lease, particularly to a company which has stated its plans as wanting to eventually take over the entire 65,000ha of the Grose Valley and entirely feral-proof electric fence it, would have set a precedent for others to pressure the State Government for their piece of National Park. This would effectively remove parts of National Parks from public hands where they are

industry interpretation centre, a railway station, car and coach parking facilities, a restaurant, shop, office, meeting rooms, cabins onsite for accommodation and guided walks, to attract an estimated 300,000 tourists per annum at an access cost of \$30 per day and \$90 overnight. They held Open Days at the site in February and March 1999 and spoke of their proposed venture as if it was a *fait accompli*, without ever having submitted a development application to Blue Mountains Council. The propaganda campaign they waged was quite self-righteously aggressive with frequent inserts in the local paper, full page advertisements, door knocking campaigns designed to influence local voters not to support Bob Debus, local Member, in the State elections, and many vehement, one-sided Letters to the Editor of the local paper, the Blue Mountains Gazette.

There has been support for the general principles behind ESL ventures (to save Australian native wildlife), but the site at Bell has always been inappropriate for such a venture as it is in a National Park or was very soon due to become a National Park – an area that should be freely available to the public, not tied up in private hands. Saving endangered species does not depend on ESL as there are a number of others who do an admirable job in this respect already, including NPWS, Zoos and other

continued on page 3



The Grose Valley - Photo Colin Wood

land he fancies, despite prior claims to it, especially claims by the public of Australia.

In September 1998, the Premier Bob Carr, promised to return the lease to National Park. 850ha of the site is also included in the current wilderness proposal for the Grose Wilderness. The non-functioning coal mine lease is due

presently being managed by NPWS.

Local environment groups and major political party representatives, after extensive meetings with Earth Sanctuaries Limites (ESL) executives and offers of other sites, are still opposed to any establishment of a business venture on the Canyon Colliery site. ESL planned to establish an underground coal mining

**BUSHWALKERS
GO TO WAR -
PAGES 6-7 & 8.**

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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 67clubs 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 website <http://www.bushwalking.org.au>

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from page 1 private organisations. Other problems exist under the surface of the ESL company, including their belief in privatising conservation, their trade in endangered species, and who may potentially control the company in the future.

ESL raised the ire of the NPWS by continually making references to their record of eliminating feral animals from National Parks. The comparison was never a fair one as the revegetation and feral animal eradication record of ESL is limited to a specific electric-fenced area, while the NPWS has millions of unfenced hectares to contend with.

Andy Macqueen (Springwood Bushwalkers & author of Back from the Brink – the story of the Grose Valley); Noel Plumb (NPA); and Keith Muir (Colong Foundation) were targetted by ESL for rebuttals and throughout the political campaign, for daring to speak out against ESL's proposals.

Of course, the owner of the Coalpac lease on the site, Noel Craven, is supportive of the project because it means he won't have to spend money to remove the infrastructure and rehabilitate the land as he is required to do. He took over the site in 1987. The contract for coal supply was terminated over a year ago and 22 workers had to go elsewhere when the mine closed.

ESL apparently needs the site to fund their Scotia Sanctuary in Western NSW and have garnered support from people in the Lithgow area who do not fall into the Blue Mountains City Council area where the site is located. Hardly any discussion has focussed on the effect that ESL's venture would have on the Blue Mountains National Park.

The Bushwalking movement has been working towards conservation of large areas to be left intact and free of modern human intrusions for 67 years since the purchase and reservation of Blue Gum Forest in 1932, and obviously also finds ESL proposals to be alien to this ethic.

The unique, breathtakingly beautiful views and pristine condition of

the area on the rim of the Grose Valley are to be taken care of and valued. They should not be locked away as the preserve of a company who will make major alterations to the ecology and the environment without consultation with the community. The prevailing thought on the topic is that the heritage we have fought for, loved, and cared for



over generations not be given away lightly to an aggressive, heavy-handed company who would make it accessible only on their terms, effectively removing it from the general public's hands.

Habitat preservation, as occurs now, is more important than merely protecting native wildlife. It has been documented in the USA and Canada that costly damage has been done to National Parks by commercial developments, which are now being removed. We do not want a repeat of that situation in New South Wales or Australia.

ESL, since finding that the area they had singled out has been removed from their easy grasp, has vowed to fight on, and are continuing their heavy handed attempt to now gain a lease from the National Parks to manage part of the public's land. With Bob Debus now holding the Environment Minister's position this scheme will hopefully prove fruitless.

GROSE WILDERNESS - HAVE YOU MADE YOUR SUBMISSION?

John Macric Conservation officer

As the preceding article shows, there is no longer any doubt that grand ecotourism schemes will emerge which conflict greatly with the vision that Bushwalkers have long had for the Grose Valley, as place where primitive values should remain intact and in a small number of instances (eg the mine site) restored.

By supporting Confederation's proposed Grose Wilderness which is now on public exhibition, you can help ensure long term protection under State law for the wild values that still occur here but which have been steadily diminished in many other places.

Contrary to some suggestions, declaring a wilderness does not threaten the popular and historic walking trails which many people use in the valley and similarly the formal camping facilities at Acacia Flat are not proposed as part of the wilderness, meaning no impact on that site.

Submissions should be sent to The Director-General Grose Wilderness Submission

C/-NPWS Blue Mountains District
PO Box 43 Blackheath NSW 2785

Continued on page 4

Annual Bush Dance

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From page 3

Suggested points:

* Strongly support the protection of the proposed wilderness through declaration under the Wilderness Act.

* Support the inclusion in the wilderness of the former Canyon Colliery lands.

* In order to preclude future erosion of the wilderness values along the southern escarpment of the gorge, support the declaration of the identified areas:

i) surrounding the Victoria Falls road (though leaving the road itself outside the boundary);

ii) in the catchment of Hat Hill Creek west of Hat Hill Road;

iii) the Mount Hay Range and adjacent plateau areas north east of the pinnacles/Flat Top area.

* In order to retain the identified wilderness values of the Govetts Gorge area (which falls outside the NPWS recommended boundary), request that the Blue Mountains National Park Plan of Management include formal recognition of a Remote Natural Area of around 2,100 ha, to ensure the gorge and adjacent areas like Fortress Ridge are managed with similar goals to the rest of the wilderness.

The Closing Date for submissions is 11th of June

EQUILIBRATED MINDS AND WILDERNESS

It is paradoxical that wilderness or primitive bushland should be one of the really indispensable necessities of modern existence in its soundest sense. This is the new and modern view. So far, civilisation has destroyed the greater part of what once was primeval wilderness. But now, when mankind begins to envisage complete urbanisation and subjection of the remaining wild parts of the country, the prospect is a wearisome and worrying one; for where else can man go to escape his civilization? The thought that the country can never go wild again is positively appalling. It has resulted in this action: that all over the world forested and scenic areas have been set apart for the recreation purposes of mankind, where he can rid himself of the shackles of ordered existence. Hence the great national parks.

But more significant than this is the demand for really "primitive-areas"-great portions of huge national parks wherein no roads may be constructed, no buildings erected, and no fences or other "improvements" are allowed. To lose themselves for a while in such roadless, primitive-areas, to "go bush" in the mountains, is the great endeavour of

countless thousands of human beings—from the cultured academician and the business man, with their multifarious interest, to the countryman, tradesman and labourer, with their simpler modes of living. More and more people want back again the forested and mountainous wilderness which has been lost. The movement is not merely a passing phase. The more complicated existence becomes, the more necessary it is to have this wonderful palliative handy to preserve the natural balance of minds, strengthen ordinary, comradely human nature, and perfect healthy physique; also to preserve for the human race that connection with things natural and wholesome which now is more than ever necessary, because of our remarkably artificial city and town environment.

Barron Thurat -

Reprinted from "The

Katoomba Daily" published

Friday August 24 1934

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 21ST AUGUST 1999

This year the AGM will be held at the Mt Colah Community Centre Pierre Cl Mt Colah . Note to all northern Clubs. Get off the freeway at the Mt Colah exit. The meeting starts at 1-00pm. There is a nice area for a picnic lunch near the centre. Tea and Coffee will be available for early birds as well as tea and bickies for afternoon tea mid-way through the meeting.

The Confederation encourages all country clubs to attend this meeting. With this in mind any member who would like to attend we will arrange for 'billets' Please contact any member of the Confederation committee. List on page 2 of this magazine.

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BUSHWALKERS GO TO WAR-AT HOME AND ABROAD

Andy Macqueen - Springwood
Bushwalking Club

Last year marked the passing of Thor Schache, an early member of the YMCA Ramblers and, more recently an active conservationist in the Blue Mountains. For a time he was President of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

When I spoke to him a couple of years ago he told me of his involvement in World War II, and gave me a perspective on bushwalking and Confederation history that I was only vaguely aware of. Of course, he was only one of many club bushwalkers who served in the war. Some returned, some did not. But his particular story intrigued me.

Thor Schache (pronounced 'Shacky') joined the Ramblers in 1939, after moving to Sydney from Melbourne. In the club he was taught about walking rhythm, breathing and so on.

He went to New Guinea in 1940 to build air force facilities. He wanted to avoid a combat role, being a pacifist, but was soon conscripted into a more demanding role, exploring and guiding for Australian and American troops in the mountains and jungles. In that capacity he walked the Kokoda Trail three times and the 'Napa Napa' once, and undertook several other long expeditions. Though the jungle environment was new to him, he thanked his bushwalker training for his very survival.

On the Napa Napa for instance, Thor told me how he was appointed guide for a contingent of Americans whose plan was to cut the Japanese off at a strategic bridge. However, he quickly found the Americans were hopelessly unfit. Only 15 of the contingent of 250 made the first day's journey, the rest collapsing exhausted along the way.

They returned to base, where Thor gave them a week's bushwalker-style fitness training and instructed them in bushcraft skills-like how to stay dry through the sodden nights. The operation was resumed, though after a week travelling in the jungle they were detected by the enemy. In the resulting bombardment almost all the contingent was killed or wounded, though, according to Thor, 25 Japanese planes were shot down. Thor himself survived largely unscathed.

During any war, the morale of the soldiers is kept up by letters and encouragement from home. News from home was rare for Thor, travelling in remote jungle, but one day there was a bright moment when he received a package of

Mitchell Library.)

Many other bushwalkers serving around the world would have received several packages like this. Unfortunately for Thor, this was the only one he got. As he explained, "I was often out bush, and the mail was sent to me via carrying stick with the mail wrapped in a banana skin to keep it dry. I knew they sent me many things and newsletters but as I had to keep moving they did not always reach me."

Who were the dedicated people back home? They were Federation bushwalkers, from various clubs. Women mainly, but also men-too old to serve overseas or retained at home for their local contributions. A leading light was

Dorothy Lawry, Sydney Bush Walker and editor of 'The Bushwalker'. A related group, led by Win Duncombe, was active within the Sydney Bush Walkers. They parcelled up photos, newsletters and copies of 'The Bushwalker' for dispatch to comrades around the globe.



Soldies off to war - photo courtesy Webster Publishing

photos and other material from a dedicated bunch of people back in Sydney. He told me "You have no idea of what pleasure these photos gave me miles from anywhere, not knowing what was in store for me, as I usually had only natives to talk to. Remembering the good times helped a lot."

Pictured-at their true size-are the four pages of the little booklet he received, depicting scenes at the 4th Annual Federation Reunion, held on 30-31 October 1943, at Heathcote Creek. Some of the figures are recognisable as key bushwalking figures of the day, including Jean Moppet and Harry Whitehouse. (The booklet will be lodged in Confederation's collection in the

Indeed, this volunteer effort can probably be thanked for the special quality of the annual wartime issues of 'The Bushwalker'. Authors and editors alike were keen to produce something special for the blokes overseas.

For most of us, all that is a long time ago and the circumstances are hardly imaginable. Bushwalking went on regardless, and the club movement survived. But some walkers never returned, (see page 8) and the lives of others had been changed forever. For some veterans, the old bushwalking haunts and practices lost their innocent former meaning; others took it up again with renewed zeal.

FOURTH ANNUAL FEDERATION REUNION
HELD
30/31ST OCTOBER 1943
AT
HEATHCOTE CREEK WATERFALL.



THEY WENT DOWN TO THE OLD CAMP SPOT WITH THE BONZA SWIMMING POOL



SOME OF THE LADS GOT BUSY AND HELPED CONSTRUCT THE CAMPFIRE



THEN, OF COURSE THEY HAD TO WASH-UP



OLD HANDS SHOWED NEW CHUMS WHERE THEY HAD SIGNED THE LOG AT PREVIOUS REUNIONS



THEY SIGNED THE LOGBOOK



THEY COOKED CHOPS



SOME MOUNTAIN TRAILERS RE - LINE



AND TALK OVER TRIPS - PAST AND FUTURE



THEY VISITED EACH OTHER



AND GOSSIPED AND YARNED



THE BOYS CONTEMPLATED THE



SWIMMING POOL



SMILED,



GIGGLED

AND

CHORTLED



'WE'RE GOING IN



'WE'RE NOT!!

“WE WILL REMEMBER THEM”

Edited from “The Bushwalker.”
1946 by Colin Wood.

Many Bushwalkers – both men and women – served with the Forces in the Second World War and most of them, fortunately, returned to us. Some, however will never again walk the bush tracks. Not one of these rests on his native soil, yet the love of each for his country was deep, intimate and abiding; deep but not ostentatious, intimate in a joy in tree and grass and sky, abiding in the very fibre.

The following is a list of those who did not return. I don't profess that this list is definitive, and apologise in advance for any discrepancies and any brave soul I have omitted.

Charles Roberts - Coast and Mountain Walkers an avid conservationist and Secretary of The Federation.

“He was the adventurous type who loved to break into new country; he was a good comrade and a good bushman” He gave his life in Malaya, after he was captured and spent time as a prisoner of war.

Arnold Ray – while living in the country, he travelled to the city and joined Coast and Mountain Walkers, “he travelled many miles on his motor bike to join his city friends on their trips.” His walking was mostly done in the Blue Mountains, but later because of change of work gave him the opportunity to walk in alpine country. He joined the RAAF. He went overseas and gave his life during operations against Germany.

Gordon Townend – Originally from England he came to love the “charm of the brown and blue Australian landscape” He joined Coast and Mountain Walkers and for some time walked in the Blue Mountains and National Park. In July 1942 he joined the RAAF hoping to be transferred to Britain and join the

defence of his motherland. His dream was fulfilled, two years later he was reported missing while on an operation over Germany.

Bruce Elder – had only been walking a short time when he enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy. He joined Coast and Mountain Walkers in 1938, his first trip was a fortnights duration in the Clyde River district. “Shattered my glass, ere half the sands had run.” What this early love for nature would have produced we shall never know. He went down with his ship, HMAS “Sydney” in December 1941.

Gordon Marshall Mannell – joined “The Sydney Bush Walkers” in March 1934, he was a member of the first party (SBW) to climb Mt King George (Mt Banks). Although the father of two young children he enlisted in the RAAF and served as an air gunner. He was posted missing after a bombing raid over Germany in 1945.

Gordon Smith – died in a Japanese prison camp during the last stages of the war. Gordon started walking as a track walker in 1921 and was an outstanding athlete, holding nearly all the Australian long distant records. He was a foundation member of “The Sydney Bush Walker” joining in 1928. He, along with other members of the club pioneered a number of routes which are now popular walks, including the first traverse of Gangerang, where his name has been given to the pass leading to the range from Kanangra; and the first trip down the Colo River. He enlisted in the AIF early in 1940 and was taken prisoner in Malaya in 1942 and died in a POW camp. “He led his parties by his quiet guidance and encouragement, never by assertion: which capacity is perhaps the measure of true 1946 democratic leadership. His unassuming manner, good humor and quiet persuasiveness endeared him to all who knew him”.

Gordon Bruce Loder – a foundation member, and first secretary of “The Trampers Club” and delegate to the Federation, and as Federation Publicity officer in 1940-41. Gordon enlisted in the RAAF in May 1941 and trained as an observer. He was a member of “The Pathfinder” force. He was commissioned as a Flight Lieutenant and awarded the DFC in 1943. He failed to return from operations over Frankfurt and was reported to be buried at Doornspuyk in Holland.

Jack Wall – a foundation member and treasurer of “The Campfire Club” Jack answered the call to arms. After training as a radio operator, he was posted to Wellingtons in the Middle East. Flying Officer Jack Wall was lost while returning from a mission over the Adriatic Sea on the 7th July 1944.

Ken Grenfell – a member of “The Rucsack Club”, he was a member for only a short time before joining the RAAF. He lost his life in an air raid over Germany.

Mac Nichols – a member of “YMCA Ramblers” joined in 1939 and became Social Secretary and member of the Rambler's basketball team. He enlisted in the AIF and was killed in action at Singapore in February 1942.

James McCormack – was captain of the YMCA Rambler's basketball team. He joined the RAAF and was attached to the “HMAS Canberra”. As a result of injury he died on 9th August 1942 at the age of 21.

Two more of “The Sydney Bush Walkers were killed in action namely **Reginald Hewitt and Norman Sall**. They were bushwalkers, and their personalities live on in the hearts and minds of other bushwalkers.

*“They shall not grow old,
as we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them,
nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun
and in the morning.*

*We will remember them.
Laurence Binyon.*



Off to War-Troop ship leaving Sydney Harbour-Photo courtesy Webster Publishing.

WE BRACED OURSELVES FOR ANOTHER NIGHT OF SPOT THE POSSUM (ADVERTISEMENT)

Karen and I new what was in store as we entered Uncle Jack's front door. We would always get an invitation to one of their slide nights a few weeks after they had returned from a walk in some national park or other. Then we would get an hour or so of gum trees and sandy tracks while Aunty Mavis did a running commentary on what we were seeing and what we had just missed out on, 'You'd be able to see the possum', she would say, 'if Jack's camera strap was not over the lens'. All pleasant enough I suppose but it was so predictable.

This time however it was very different.

We were actually on the edge of our seats. Here were pictures of Jack and Mavis standing on the top of the world. Well it looked like it anyway. Jack beaming away while Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain on earth loomed up behind him and Mavis walking through a jungle of rhododendrons all in bloom, the biggest I had ever seen. There was Mavis spinning the prayer wheels at a Buddhist monastery and buying some gifts for home at a Tibetan refugee centre I think she said and Jack in the tea gardens at Darjeeling and relaxing with a beer and new friends on the verandah at a grand hotel in Kalimpong.

Jack kept his slide show down to 30 minutes this time and Mavis spoke differently, relaxed but with more feeling somehow. We actually wanted to see more. When we were talking about it later we felt that both of them seemed to have changed a little, enthusiastic but calmer at the same time. Something had happened on this walk and it got us thinking...

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VALE JOE TURNER

With sadness we report that bushwalker Joe Turner died on 2th February 1999, aged almost 98. Joe was a member of the Sydney Bush Walkers, and a member of the Blue Gum Forest Committee responsible for the famous reservation of the forest in 1931-32. All other members passed away some years ago.

Joe was secretary of the Committee and subsequently, as a Trustee of the Forest, he was secretary of the Blue Gum Forest Trust. He resigned in 1941 to move to Armidale, never having missed a meeting in his ten years of service. After his move Joe continued his interest in conservation, being active in the National Parks Association and the local Flora and Flora society.

I was privileged to interview Joe in 1994. I was struck by his vivid and heartfelt recollections of the Blue Gum campaign, and by his most gentlemanly manner. The inspiration he gave me was one of the driving forces which led to my book on the forest.

A fuller obituary to Joe was published in the March edition of *Sydney Bushwalker*.
Andy Macqueen

PS: The soundtrack and transcriptions of Andy Macqueen's interview with Joe Turner, and six other interviews conducted in the Blue Gum Forest Oral History Project, are expected to be available to interested persons or clubs later this year.

*OUTDOOR
LIFE
SAME*

WALKING IN THE BUCKENBOWRA GORGE AREA



**Conservation
Officer John Macris
reports on a three
day walk in some
rugged yet inviting
country west of Batemans**

Bay - the Buckenbowra gorge.

If you have driven the Kings Highway from Batemans Bay up onto the southern tabelands to Braidwood, you may have caught a few glimpses while rounding the tight bends, of a very deep gulf falling away to the south of Clyde Mountain. The eastern escarpment here is less than 40 kilometres from the coast and rises to between 800 and 1000 metres in altitude, creating a magnet for moisture laden air. At the foot of this range the



South-East Forest Alliance collection

Buckenbowra River and a number of tributaries flow southwards before turning east through gentler country to join the Clyde River near Nellingen. The upper reaches of this catchment (over 3,000 ha) are essentially free of modern human disturbance, to the extent that even the major surrounding ridges have been spared from the network of fire trails that have ingressed much of the southern ranges since the 1960s. Thus we have in this river a 'reference' catchment which must be regarded as a rarity.

I had been interested in this area for some time as it forms the biggest missing link in the chain of National Parks that currently stretch along the southern ranges from the Illawarra to the East Gippsland area in Victoria. The area is presently within two State Forests - Monga and Buckenbowra, which join Budawang

National Park in the north and Deua in the south. It has been the very steep nature of this catchment which has seen it spared from the logging schedule to date. Steep areas may deter loggers (for a time) but they have something of the opposite effect on curious bushwalkers.

On the very windy long weekend after Christmas, the party of two left our car near the head of the 'Corn Trail' (more on this later) and headed cross country to Murrengebung Mountain on the range which divides the Buckenbowra and Mongarlowe Rivers. Just as the maps depicted, this range is without a trace of firetrails. The first few kilometres were characterised by moist eucalypt forests with a dense understory of ground ferns and vines - quite slow and taxing walking. After fighting through one particularly

thick saddle, the ground became rockier and our vegetation dramatically changed to a dry open forest with sparse understory of grass trees and heathy shrubs. This made for very agreeable ridge walking, although less than it might have been due to the ferocious winds which were right at that time

bedeviling the Sydney-Hobart competitors. The open vegetation also revealed interesting views across to the coast, north to Pigeon House and down into the fairly formidable looking gorge

The ridges leading into the gorge, with rare exception all start very steeply off the main range and picking the right point to exit was tricky. As it eventuated, the exit point we first selected then abandoned in favour of backtracking a short way would have provided the best way onto our proposed descent. Our second best choice rewarded us with about an hour of sliding (but its long enough ago now to remember the chore with fondness).

To put the ridge into perspective, after an extremely steep first 200 metres it was probably akin in steepness to the Colboyd Range that accesses the Kowmung via lower Christys Creek. We

reached the river by around 6.00 pm and in our depleted state and eagerness to scratch out a very minimalist campsite, we did not pay much regard to the stunning watercourse in the small ravine below us. After a blowy night we elected to spend the morning exploring up river. The point where we had set up camp was at a tight bend in the watercourse and the ravine turned out to be short lived. In fact the river was remarkably easy to follow, which allows one to concentrate almost solely on the scenery - this is a rainforest stream and its beauty is the equal of any I have seen in the northern rainforest parks. Masses of birdsnest ferns abounded along with



Photo by John Macris

cabbage palms, Dicksonia tree ferns and canopy species such as the Giant Stinging Tree, Coachwood and Sassafras.

The river is relatively small although still bigger than your average creek. Attractive pools with small cascades and fringed with rainforest were in reasonable abundance.

After a successful morning in the upper reaches of the Buckenbowra River we headed down river through continuing exquisite rainforest, cascades and pools. Progress was reasonably easy and the only thing this section of the gorge lacks is places to camp.

A few kilometres downstream the rainforest began to give way to open forests. Soon after the main access ridge on the east side of the valley came in and with it the historic Corn Trail.

This was a route for transporting produce to the tablelands from the farmland in the lower valleys during the first half of last century. It had become



South-East Forest Alliance collection

disused by the turn of the century but was reopened as a bicentennial project in 1988. We followed this downstream for a short way, admiring some giant river oaks and tall open forest.

The banks also become a little bit more suited to camping as the valley

opens up.

A night was spent in this transition area before capitalising on the Corn Trail for a quick exit the following morning.

This ridge is quite a tame gradient with frequent views over the gorge and a very interesting mixture of forests and finally heath as the high plateau is attained. I am aware that this is one route under consideration for a 3 state walking track which is in its conceptual stages. I have strong reservations about the suitability of this area for accommodating such a tourist concept, particularly with the limited availability of natural campsites and also the high wilderness and wild river values (Buckenbowra is under assessment as a wilderness area) so I would like to see the 'mega track' proposal look elsewhere.

As the picture from the South East Forest Alliance collection

shows, the neighbouring Mongarlowe River contains forests of the remarkable Pinkwood which, with their coppicing growth habit, are over 2,000 years in age. It is our hope that these wild lands will become a National Park as part of the Southern Forest assessment, which is due for completion this year. So would be closed the main gap in the escarpment reserve system (the only other being between Deua and Wadbilliga in the upper Tuross catchment).

I would recommend the area as capable of providing either a very interesting on track walk in the Corn Trail, a challenging 2-3 day wilderness type walk via the numerous trackless ridges and mountain streams or a combination of the two as we did.

Your club could support the southern forest parks initiatives by scheduling a walk in this area or other key park proposals. If you would like some further notes on walking in the area contact me under the numbers listed at the front of this issue of the Bushwalker.

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TRANSPORT FOR BUSHWALKERS TO BLUE MTS N.P.

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Katoomba - Narrow Neck - Nellies Glen - Megalong Valley
Jenolan Caves - Kanangra Walls - Yerranderie

DEPARTS Yerranderie 12.30pm Sunday & Thursday for
Jenolan Caves (3pm) - Megalong Valley - Katoomba - Sydney

TO NATTAI & MORTON N.P.

DEPARTS Sydney Airport 7.30pm Sunday & Thursday
(Stops overnight at Warrimbirra Cabins Bargo)

Departs Bargo Rail 9.15am Monday & Thursday for
Mittagong - Starlights - Meryla Pass - Bungonia Caves
Nerigga - Wog Wog - Newhaven Gap

DEPARTS Nerriga 3.30pm Mon & Fri for Wog Wog & Sydney
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NAVSHIELD 99 AUSTRALIA'S PREMIER NAVIGATION EVENT

This is an attempt to again enthuse you into being part of our 11th Emergency Services Navigation Shield - NavShield 99.

The NavShield is a great way to get some concentrated navigation practice over either one day or two. There is no set course to follow (like in an Orienteering event) so you can do as many or as few check points as takes your fancy but for safety you will still have to be part of a team.

100 teams competed last year, this year promises to be bigger with teams coming from Victoria

You can either camp overnight by your vehicle or drive in on Saturday morning for the massed start at around 8.20am. Don't plan at arriving then as you have to register, with all the other keen last minute registrees, and map all the checkpoints before planning your route.

This is a bushwalkers event. Some Rogaines give you 'premarked' maps but not this one. Catering is available at the finish so you can get on with some great socialising with other bushwalkers and emergency services personnel.

They don't bite and often are interesting to see how non bushwalkers view the bush; often sympathetic but different.

The presentation ceremony is always held about one and a half hours after the finish so that by the time you are ready to go home you will know your results and be thinking of how to do better next year. Its that type of event! It sucks you in to try again and again. We have many repeat teams from a wide range of areas and emergency services.

Bushwalking clubs participation awards \$300 for 2 day \$150 for 1day.

Send an entry form back to the **Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Secretary -**

PO Box 22 Canterbury 2193.

Entry forms will be posted to your club in late April. The entry form has more details of how the event is organised but NO location details.

.So send an entry form in but don't bring them or your GPS to NavShield '99.

Regards, Keith Maxwell
Director Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue



When: 3rd-4th July 1999

Where: South-West of harbour

Who can enter: The event is open to rescue teams world-wide and confederations of Bushwalking club members and rogainers. All groups must have current insurance to enter.

What to bring: Each team must be self-sufficient. Two day teams must carry sleeping bags shelter, food and clothing. One day teams need not carry bags or shelter.

John Tonitto (02) 9789-2527

Fax(02) 9718-7272

email NAV99@start.com.au

entries close 25th June



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DATES TO REMEMBER FOR 1999 GET THEM ON YOUR CLUB'S CALENDAR

March	16th - Confederation General Meeting Ashfield RSL 7-30pm	20-21st Search & Rescue Training	27-28th - 12/24 hour Rogaine	29-30th Senior First Aid Training
April	20th - Confederation General Meeting Ashfield RSL 7-30pm			
May	1st - Remote Area First Aid St John Ambulance	18th - Confederation General Meeting Ashfield RSL 7-30pm		
June	9th - Remote Area First Aid St John Ambulance	15th - Confederation General Meeting Ashfield RSL 7-30pm	29th - 6 hour paddy Pallin Rogaine	
July	4th - Remote Area First Aid St John Ambulance	3-4th July NavShield Rescue Services Navigation Shield	20th - Confederation General Meeting Ashfield RSL 7-30pm	
August	17th - Confederation General Meeting Ashfield RSL 7-30pm	21st - Confederation Annual General Meeting Mitchell Park	28-29th - 12/24 NSW Championship Rogaine	
September	4th - Remote Area First Aid St John Ambulance	17th - Annual Confederation Bush Dance	21st - Confederation General Meeting Ashfield RSL 7-30pm	25th - 12hour Lake Macquarie Rogaine
October	5th - Remote Area First Aid St John Ambulance	16-17th - Advanced Search & Rescue Training	19th - Confederation General Meeting Ashfield RSL 7-30pm	
November	6th - Remote Area First Aid St John Ambulance	16th - Confederation General Meeting Ashfield RSL 7-30pm		
December	21st - Confederation General Meeting Ashfield RSL 7-30pm			

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 10,000 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.

Club's Supplement to **THE Bushwalker**

Australian Alps Walking Track



Alex Tucker Tracks & Access Officer

Confederation has written to the Manager Snowy Mountains Region, NPWS requesting a review of a decision to include some 15 km of public road in the official AAWT route from Charlottes Pass to Guthega power Station. We fully agree with the decision not to promote the trackless area of the Main Range between Mt Townsend and the Whites River hut both for walker safety and for the environmental impacts of increased numbers. We have supported the proposal of the Tasmanian Parks Service to introduce a licensing system for their World Heritage Wilderness Area. We consider that the high country of Kosciuszko N.P. needs and deserves similar protection.

The Summit Road to Smiggins Holes and the Link Road to Guthega are often icy even on the mornings in Spring & Summer. They often appear as narrow snow canyons with very little room for walkers to avoid a skidding car, particularly if the driver has not much experience of driving on icy roads. When combined with the lack of a view it all tends to encourage more walkers to tackle the Main Range, whether or not they are equipped and experienced enough to do so.

There is an alternative, leaving the summit road after about 2 km from the Chalet and following a "footpad" along Spencer's Creek to the Guthega Road thence downhill to the

Along The Track

Power Station and along the Schlink Pass firetrail to the Whites River Hut.

I would be interested to learn the reactions of readers to the alternative.

We understand that in 1997, a subcommittee of the intergovernmental Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC) had allocated funds for a feasibility study of the above alternative. It appears that a representative of the NPWS on the AALC may have vetoed the study and it did not proceed. It was this decision that we hoped to have reviewed.

We received a detailed reply from the Snowy Mountains Region advising that their staff had no knowledge of the brief for the Feasibility Study but after discussions among the staff and with the Regional Advisory Committee, the consensus was that construction of the Spencers Creek track was not an appropriate activity in that part of the Park.

We have no complaint with the Region who seem to have given our letter due consideration. However we consider that there has been a high level veto, it would be a breach of the spirit of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Relation to the Co-operative Management of the Australian Alps" signed in 1986 by the four Ministers responsible for the National Parks. The signatory for NSW was the Hon. Bob Carr M.P. in his capacity as Minister for Planning and Environment. The MoU was reaffirmed in 1998 and The Hon Pam Allen M.P. was a signatory. We have now written to the Premier and the Minister for the Environment requesting action to allow the feasibility study to take place and, if the results are approved by the AALC, to fund the construction and maintenance of the Spencer's Creek track as a project of State significance.

Summit Management/ Technical Committee

In his letter, the Acting Manager, Snowy Mountains Region invited Confederation to appoint a representative to the above Committee. This offer has been accepted by Confederation and I am asking any interested members to apply. The appointee does not have to be a representative of his club to confederation. The Constitution allows for the appointment of co-opted members. However she/he will be expected to report on the meetings attended, particularly to advise of any matters not adequately covered in the official minutes. The prime requirement is the ability to present the interests of bushwalkers to the SM/TC in a forcible but polite manner even if she/he is a minority of one person. The Spencer's Creek track might prove to be a rare example. Obviously the appointment of a member of the Geehi Bushwalking Club, based in Cooma would be the least expensive for Confederation, and I have advised them of the appointment by letter. However I have budgeted for the travel costs listed in the "advertisement" in this issue, I believe it is important that our representative stays in Jindabyne or any other meeting location for at least two nights to take full advantage of the informal contacts with other committee members.

Access to Bonnum Pic.

The possibility of providing access to Bonnum Pic without crossing private farmland is still open. NPWS surveyors have now remarked the boundary of Nattai N.P. In company with the newly transferred Ranger and the President of Southern Highlands Bushwalkers, I hope to inspect the boundary before the end of April. We hope that a "foot-pad" along the fence line will be practicable, with minimal disturbance to bushland.

Celebration of the New Millennium

Confederation has received a letter from the Border Bushwalking Club, based in Wodonga as follows.

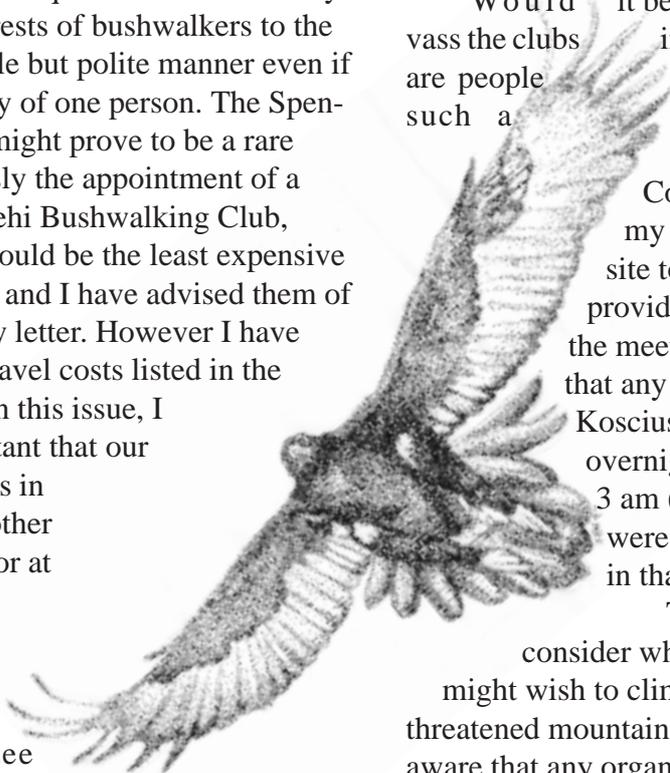
"Our club feels that we ought to do something special to celebrate the new millennium on 1.1.2000. At present we are proposing that we should climb Mt Bogong the highest mountain in Victoria and welcome in the new millennium from there. If clubs in each State climbed the highest mountain in that State we could have a phone link up, although we would have to allow for the time difference across Australia,

Would it be possible for you to canvass the clubs in your State to see if there are people who wish to participate in such a phone hook up ..."

The April meeting of Confederation decided that my report was an appropriate site to "canvass" the idea, provided that it was clear that the meeting was of the opinion that any expedition to Mt Kosciuskzo, and either staying overnight or stumbling down at 3 am (Midnight W.A Time) were all inappropriate activities in that National Park.

The meeting did not consider whether individual clubs might wish to climb less environmentally threatened mountains. Club Members will be aware that any organised activity in a NSW National Park requires specific written approval from the NPWS District Manager and that the Service does us the compliment of treating all activities on a club program as "organised" whether or not the participants agree to that adjective. (of course any private walk not listed in the club program is not covered by Confederation's insurance policies.)

Federations & Clubs in other States will, of course, make their own judgements on the proposal. Personally I would not enjoy the prospect of being among dozens of walkers climbing Mt Ossa or the Peasants Ridge of Mt



Barney (as a surrogate for Bartle Frere near Cairns) I must warn anyone wishing to climb the highest point: in Ku Ring Gai Chase N.P that it will be crowded by members of the local Rural Fire Service conducting their annual 'Baywatch' for irresponsible yachtees illegally letting off their "distress" flares.

Incidentally, in quoting the Border B/W letter I omitted their assertion that the start of the new Millenium was 1/1/2000. The Confederation meeting agreed without dissent that the Christian era commenced with the year 1 A.D. Therefore the new millenium begins on 1/1/2001. However, we have no objection to anyone celebrating the millenium twice if they so wish.



Wanted

Clubs are invited to submit a name of a member to represent Confederation on the Kosciuszko Summit Management/Technical Committee.

Applicants must be able to present Confederation's view points forcibly and politely even if a minority of one person high country experience desirable. Meetings are usually twice a year at Jindabyne. Representative will be kept informed of our views on agenda items and will provide a written report if it is necessary to amplify the meeting minutes.

Confederation will meet reasonable travel costs and at least two nights accommodation convenient to the venue.

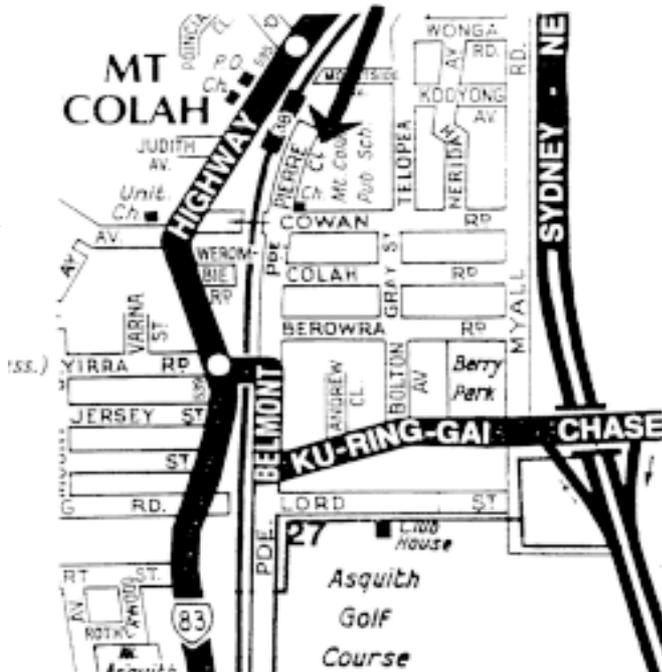
Applications signed by the Club Secretary or president and the applicant should be sent to the Secretary GPO Box 2090 SYDNEY 1043 preferably by June 14 If an extension is needed advise Prudence by June 14. phone (02) 4451 4028 fax (02) 9453 1628

AGM 21st August 1999

This year the AGM will be held at the Mt Colah Community Centre Pierre Cl Mt Colah (refer map). Note to all northern Clubs. Get off freeway at the Mt Colah exit.

The meeting starts at 1-00pm. There is a nice area for a picnic lunch near the centre. Tea and Coffee will be available for early birds as well as tea and bickies for afternoon tea mid-way through the meeting.

The Confederation encourages all country clubs to attend this meeting. With this in mind any member who would like to attend we will arrange for 'billets' Please contact any member of the Confederation committee. List on page 2 of this magazine.



ATTENTION - ALL BUSHWALKERS BORAL GREEN SHAREHOLDERS

Boral Green Shareholders is a non profit organisation which came to together in 1994 The reason for the group's formation was a feeling of desperation over the company's woodchipping and logging activities in the forests of NSW and Tasmania. Boral is the second largest woodchip exporter in the world. Our native forests are being woodchipped now and sent to Japan for paper making through its subsidiary Sawmillers Exports Limited (SEPL) in NSW and Forest Resources Property limited in Tasmania There are many consequences of such an activity. Birds, Koalas and arboreal mammals lose their habitat, soil is degraded and the diversity of the forests is lost. There are a number of instances where areas being logged by the company were found to have koalas and Boral has attempted to continue to log despite conservationists' protestations woodchipping cannot be justified on employment grounds either as it is not a value adding activity .

The company frequently claims that it only woodchip that remain on the forest floor however, the contrary seems to be the case One group visited one of Boral's mills on the north coast at Heron's Creek last year and we were advised that there is a recovery rate of 38% per log while the rest goes to the chipper. We saw a large pile of logs destined for the chipper -they looked to us perfectly good millable logs. We believe that companies have to become environmentally responsible and listen to the concerns of their shareholders and the community. If they fail to do so they will lose the support of the public which will ultimately affect their balance sheets.

BORAL GREEN SHAREHOLDERS - MISSION STATEMENT

1. to save old growth, wilderness and native forests from logging and wood-chipping
2. To stop the destruction of the natural environment through its business activities.
- 3.. To foster an ethic of responsible environmental corporate behaviour
4. To maintain and enhance the natural capital for the long ten benefit of share holders

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