

THE Bushwalker



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ABOLITION OF THE NPWS? IT'S STILL THERE!

by Michael Maack Conservation officer



On September 24, 2003 the NSW Government announced a far-reaching change to the organisation of the environment

and ecological conservation agencies within the state. By amalgamating the NPWS, the EPA, Royal Botanic Gardens and Resource NSW into a new super-ministry called the Department of Environment and Conservation under the aegis of the former Minister for the Environment, Bob Debus, the government has signalled its intention to tackle the numerous environmental issues affecting the state in a coordinated manner. There is a Sydney-centric aspect to the intention to foster ties between the new department's activities and the Sydney Catchment Authority.

OVERALL THIS COORDINATION IS THE PROMISE BUT THE REALITY MAY BE DIFFERENT.

All of these departments were borne out of separate issues. The NPWS historically was given a bailiwick to look after the State's National Park System but not the forestry that was gazetted as a resource to be exploited (e.g. old growth forests). The EPA came into existence to regulate industry and other human landuses that threatened to destroy our state's biosphere by a 'thousand cuts'. Resource NSW was a department dedicated to the minimisation of waste through the recycling of excess, discarded or used product by any section of the community. The Royal Botanic Garden is a premier research institution concentrating on defining the taxonomy of our endemic and introduced flora and their associated antigens and pathogens.

Creating closer ties among these various bodies is to be welcomed. Such an attitude is mirrored in the enthusiastic support given to the announcement by the peak environmental bodies within the state. To add to the kudos generated by the amalgamating announcement another governmental fillip was announced on October 15, 2003 with the declaration of the end to broadscale landclearing from January next year.

All this is marvellous news for conservation in NSW. But hard-bitten critics such as myself, and I

detect a note of the same attitude in other environmental group press releases, have tinged the welcoming note with a slightly perceptible modicum of cynicism. My dampened enthusiasm comes from an experience with merged entities in large industry. The difficulties in merging highly bureaucratic departments and their attendant systems follows the same conundrums that plague the private sphere.

The problems reside in the coalescing of high aspect ratio hierarchies. People whose careers were founded on the institutionalising of bureaucratic operating systems are forced to discard their life's work and adopt another set of values and processes. Peter Senge in his book the "Fifth Discipline" traced the different attitudes that could be adopted in response to a new vision. The linear spectrum of attitudes ranges from commitment, enrolment, genuine to grudging compliance, to the negative and destructive attitudes expressed through noncompliance and apathy. All these attitudes will operate to varying degrees and the success of the merger will be dependent on how well the new board is able to harness the positive to the detriment of the negative. It has been my experience that the problems do not reside in the lower levels of the departmental structures but among the ranks of management hierarchy themselves.

Hopefully the overriding personal visions of proffering a valuable service to the environment will overcome any petty jealousies and power structure machinations that may be a consequence of the coalescing of rival organisations. I sincerely hope that the officers adopt the cooperative approach as any other type of approach is a demonstration of a lack of maturity. The environment can only be the loser.

missed areas between the sweeps. Line searching is thus labour / time intensive and dependent on the ability of personnel to cope with the terrain to be effective. BWRS is always confident that its bushwalkers have thoroughly searched steep, scrubby terrain and is sceptical of other groups who claim faster sweep rates.

Modern search and rescue relies on radio communications. Small numbers of search teams can be very effective since they can always be redirected as events unfold in the field. During this weekend BWRS combined with another VRA Squad of radio enthusiasts "CREST" to practice the use of the BWRS HF frequency and a UHF / VHF radio net via radio repeaters.

Whilst the HF radio network of BWRS has consistently communicated out of rugged country it does require time to set up. UHF / VHF radios are compact and quick to use but will not communicate without 'line of sight' between radios. Radio relays on high points of buildings and hills can overcome this problem by automatically receiving then retransmitting UHF / VHF radio signals to increase the range and coverage of the UHF / VHF network.

The outcome of this weekend is that the missing plane is still there. Once again, BWRS is confident that its search teams have thoroughly searched around Mt Nelson although the area searched was less than we had planned. There is still a large area of this high probability crash site for future investigation. The CREST personnel, unlike most other times, could not drive to Mt Nelson so had to decide what level of equipment they could carry to arrange an effective radio relay. UHF / VHF radio transmissions were mostly good. There was good interaction between members of both squads with all members enjoying the training.

More information can always be found at the website. The BWRS website at www.bwrs.org.au has information about Barrington Tops and BWRS history, NavShield, bush safety, training and joining BWRS. The NSW Volunteer Rescue Association (VRA) website at www.rescue.org.au contains a range of general information about the VRA and its affiliates including BWRS and CREST.

On the weekend of 18 / 19 October 2003 Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad (BWRS) held a training weekend in the Chichester region of Barrington Tops.

On a windy, cold night in August 1980 a light plane "VH-MDX" enroute from the Gold Coast to Sydney got into difficulties and disappeared in the Barrington Tops area. The plane followed an unusual route and was poorly tracked in its last movements as it dramatically lost height along with failure of its flying control instruments. As such, where this pl

ane disappeared is not exactly known. There were many persons who knew the five serving Police Officers in the aircraft so that there is still strong interest in the whereabouts of VH-MDX with many pet theories of where VH-MDX disappeared.

BWRS has been involved in many searches to find this plane including the original search, "Operation Barrington", 'Whispering Gully' and the 'smell site'. Many other groups have also searched parts of Barrington Tops. However, for various reasons central co-ordination of search results has been poor. Finding this plane was always going to be difficult. The plane could be spread over as little as 5 to 10 square metres with the engine buried deep in the ground.

A reconsideration of the plane's last moments and areas searched suggested that a high probably area had never been sufficiently thoroughly searched. On the weekend of October 18 / 19 BWRS did a training exercise in line searching around the Mt Nelson area. Search teams involved in line searching aim to view every square metre of their search area by carefully moving in parallel line sweeps. Good navigation is required to ensure that is no overlap in sweep areas (ie areas viewed twice) nor any



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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.

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The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW Inc represents approximately 70 clubs with a total membership around 11,000 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 www.bushwalking.org.au

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THE BUSHWALKER

is the magazine of the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW Inc. It's published quarterly. The aim of the magazine is to provide articles and information of interest to the members of clubs affiliated with the Confederation and Bushwalkers generally. Any opinions expressed by individual authors do not always represent the official views of the Confederation.

HISTORY OF BATEMANS BAY BUSHWALKERS CLUB

Jill Carpenter (Publicity Officer)



In April, 1985 Jean Kenway placed an advertisement in the local newspaper calling a gathering of people 'interested in forming a bushwalking group' in Batemans Bay. After a

further meeting and trial walks, it was agreed that a new independent club should be formed in preference to association with an existing organisation. The Batemans Bay Bushwalkers Club was formed in June, 1985 and incorporated just over two years later. It currently has about 160 members.

It is active throughout the year, apart from a Christmas-January break. Two walks are held each week and these are alternated between Wednesday and Saturday and Thursday and Sunday to make them more widely accessible. General Meetings are limited to four per year when programs and a short magazine are distributed.

With a surround of State Forests, National Parks and beaches, a wide variety of walks are available reasonably close to the town – mostly within a distance of 50km. Walks range from Easy through to Hard and Exploratory. To meet safety and insurance requirements the Club has developed strict procedures in planning, approval and leadership of walks. At least 1500 walks have been held since the Club was

National Parks. This started with an 11,000km Safari Tour to Western Australia! Since then there have been tours in South Australia, Victoria, Northern NSW and Queensland and next year a group is visiting Tasmania. Walking in these more remote locations greatly extends our knowledge of our country, is interesting and sometimes challenging as some walks are necessarily 'exploratory'.

WALKING ON DURRAS MOUNTAIN

Durras Mountain rises steeply to an altitude of 285 metres from the Pacific Ocean on the South Coast between Ulladulla and Batemans Bay. Its glorious position invites walkers to enjoy various levels of walks. Easy walks from the car park near its open cleared volcanic summit give marvellous views west across forests to the Budawang Range including Pigeonhouse. A good medium day walk is a circuit

wide variety of rainforest species ranging from subtropical and temperate forests, to species more commonly associated with the high altitude rainforests



"Bangalow Palms and Cooper's Tree Fern are at their Southern limit at Durras Mountain" photo by Jill Carpenter

from either Pretty or Pebbly Beach along the beaches and rocks then up through eucalypt and rainforest to the summit. And for the more adventurous there are off-track scrambles down the western flank into gullies with Bangalow palms and Tree-ferns and several other subtropical rainforest species at their southern limit in Australia. All of this makes Durras

of Tasmania.

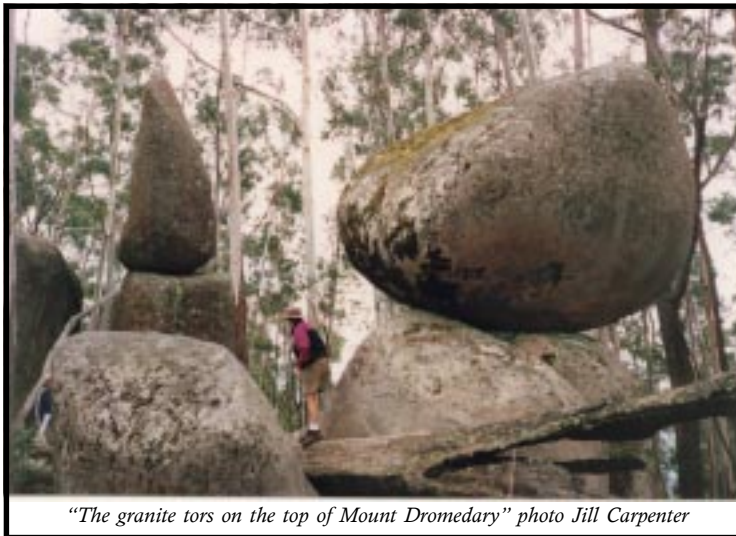
The mountain towers 979 metres over the historic villages of Tilba Tilba and Central Tilba and it takes around 5 hours to complete the 11 kilometre return walk. From the top there are views of Bermagui and Wallaga Lake.

THE CORN TRAIL

In June 2002, Len Tompkins, our Walks Organiser at the time, led a party of seven of our strong walkers on a survey of the historic Corn Trail, which links the top of Clyde Mountain with Buckenboursa River. Our members had previously discovered that the track was becoming less and less accessible.

Their detailed and careful survey provided the information needed by National Parks and Wildlife Service to rehabilitate the track. Suggestions were made for information shelters, parking, access roads, better signage, distance and track markers, and removal of trees fallen across the track, all of which were located accurately using our GPS.

The Corn Trail is now back on our Walks Program for the walking pleasure of our members.



"The granite tors on the top of Mount Dromedary" photo Jill Carpenter

formed, excluding walks from camps and safari tours.

Walk proposal forms include details of route etc. with map and grid references, and the names of those who went on the walk are added on the day.

A computer record of walks has been compiled and is kept updated as an aid to the Walks Organisers and Walk Leaders. The use of GPS location devices has been introduced and included in training programs for walk leaders.

In addition to the regular day walks, a number of Club members undertake overnight backpacking excursions. The Club organises Accommodated Camps (averaging about two per year) both in NSW and interstate as well as Bush Camps as a base for day walks in other areas.

A more recent development has been our so-called Safari Tours where a group of members with caravans, campervans or just tents, drives from one camping location to another, usually in or adjoining

Mountain unique.

MOUNT DROMEDARY

Named by Captain Cook in 1770, this mountain has the Aboriginal name of Gulaga. The area is now known as the Gulaga Flora Reserve and is an important Aboriginal site.

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"THREE MEN ON A WALK"

(FROM BOMBALA TO MELBOURNE - OCTOBER 1924)

J.R. Turner 2nd December 1924

transcribed by Thais Turner

The desire to travel by the ordinary means of conveyance is a natural one, and the progress in the methods of vehicular travel is considerable. Nevertheless a walking tour is fraught with a great deal of pleasure to those who have the necessary enthusiasm. The three wise men of this party therefore decided on an unconventional holiday by means of a walking tour, from Bombala to Melbourne. Just how much of the tour was walked remains to be told.

After a very long drawn out railway journey we arrived at Bombala at mid-day on Saturday, Oct. 4th. The day was marred by a vicious wind which gradually decreased at noon. Thereafter the day was most enjoyable, and we spent the remainder of the day inspecting the historic Monaro town. It is prettily situated on the Bombala River, which divides the town into two parts. The business done in the town is considerable, as it is the centre of a large pastoral district.

At 6.30am on the following day we commenced our journey. The initial stages of the road to Delegate were marked by an absence of trees. Owing to the pastoral interests clearing the land of the native gum, there is a conspicuous absence of trees for some miles.

After breakfasting on grilled steak and bread, together with a liberal supply of butter, we were alarmed at the signs of approaching rain. Breakfast was hastily concluded and we took to the road. We were on our way only a few minutes when heavy rain set in. The position was beginning to look serious when a gentleman in a Ford car kindly offered to motor us to Delegate. We gratefully accepted the offer. Later a "lift" was also given to a "real" tramp who was, unfortunately, deaf. The car owner turned out to be the Rev. Mr Bradley, Presbyterian Minister of Bombala. He was a real Australian and loved the bush, and the bush folk. He conversed freely with us during the very pleasant drive over the Delegate hills, and enlightened our party with his well-informed views.

Delegate was reached at 11 am. It was still raining, with every indication of further showers, so we made arrangements for accommodation at the Royal Hotel. After dinner the weather quickly cleared, and bright sunshine greeted our appearance on the hotel verandah. As Delegate held no attraction, being the usual, small, Country Township we decided on starting out for Bendoc, eight miles further on, and in Victorian territory. Soon we were on the highway which makes in the direction of Mt. Delegate, a towering peak 3000 ft high overlooking the Delegate district. As we approached the foot of Mt. Delegate the country became more rugged. Galahs and other birds made their appearance in the forest, and the walk was most interesting. After skirting the mountain the smoke arising from chimneys in the distance betokened the village of Bendoc, and after an hour's trip we reached the hotel kept by "Billy" Mustard. Immediately upon our arrival a storm broke over Bendoc and lasted for some time. It was responsible for a torrential downpour and we were indeed fortunate to escape it. "Billy" Mustard and his family made us welcome in a homely way and soon had tea prepared. Later we conversed with the family, before a roaring fire, about the district and then retired a weary but happy band.

Being ahead of schedule we accepted an invitation by an old prospector named Dowling, to explore the neighbouring mountain, Mt. Delegate. The local constable and his wife also accompanied us, and so

the party set out. The knowledge of the bush displayed by the local members of the party was marvellous. Despite the absence of any signs of a track, we were led to the pinnacle in a very short time. En route, several rabbits were shot, and much sport resulted in other directions.

The Constable's wife was an Australian "amazon". With her hair closely cropped, garbed in semi-masculine clothes, and slung across her shoulders, a Winchester rifle, she presented a truly strong character.

The view from Mt. Delegate is a fine one and takes in the whole of Southern Monaro.

Rising early next morning, Oct 7th, we were soon in the real Gippsland country. Giant trees and thick foliage were to be seen on every hand. Soon the valley of the Bonang came into view, and later through a clearing in the trees a remarkable view was obtained of the whole of the countryside. Towering away to the north-west was the snow-capped peak of Kosciusko, with the Snowy Mountains leading up to this famous mount.

Rain commenced to fall as we reached the Bonang River. Here we discovered a dray with the machinery for a gold-mining plant. As alluvial gold exists in this area, there are many small plants and quite a number of individual prospectors.

Hastily we prepared lunch. The menu consisted chiefly of raisins, bread and meat. The whole was finished by a draught of tea, and then to the road. In order to get the full value of the natural conditions obtaining, we decided to take the old road to Goone-Gerah.

It was a delightful stretch. Unfrequented for years, vegetation on every hand was gradually overgrowing the old road, and many stricken trees with immense girths impeded progress every few hundred yards.

Eventually we reached the newly made road and later we descended on the hamlet of Goone-Gerah, a tired and hungry party. This stretch of 22 miles was one of the best of the tour. Goone-Gerah is a picturesque spot in the mountainous Gippsland country. Huge hills surround the small clearings and man seems to hold only a permissive occupancy from nature, which holds unlimited power on every hand.

We lodged, or rather remained at Mrs. Edward's boarding-house that night. The landlady who was a typically stage type Australian housewife had an obsession concerning influenza. She feared one of our party might harbour some dreadful germ on his person. After submitting ourselves to a complete cross-examination as to our capacity to resist colds etc. we were granted the privileges of the fire, and it was here that trouble commenced. Harold Fraser placed his boots before the glowing flame and left to change his clothes. The fire burnt so fiercely that, before we had time to realise the danger, serious damage occurred to the very necessary boots, by shrivelling the soles beyond repair.

This occasioned a change of plan. The mail coach from Delegate to Orbost arrived at 9pm and perforce we booked seats to Orbost as Harold Fraser was without tangible means of support.

At about four in the morning the coach was made

ready, and after a little breakfasting, we commenced our forty mile journey.

The coach needs a little description. Despite its pretentious claim to be called a mail coach truthful observers would unhesitatingly dub it a spring cart, for this is actually its original design. Some few simple alterations transformed it into a passenger vehicle, and so Cobb & Co were perpetuated by this rude conveyance, travelling regularly between Delegate and Orbost.

The horses kept a fairly good jog trot and soon we were at the road-makers camp four miles from Goone-Gerah. They were engaged in regrading the road and seemed pleased to see us all. A motley crowd they represented several nations including, Italy, U.S.A., Greece. They were busily engaged drawing their breakfast rations from the cook, who presided over a fairly well stocked bark hut.

Set in a huge forest with giant gum and mountain ash this spot made an impression on the coach passengers. King Lory parrots, Rosellas, together with Galahs, and smaller mountain birds added to the scene. The presence of the busy road camp seemed to intrude on a natural sanctuary.

From here to Jensions the forest continued in unbroken splendour.

The straight tall gums were a source of continual admiration. Some beautiful tree ferns also evoked considerable delight. At Jensions, a small clearing wedged in a valley, heavily wooded, we made a short stay. After collecting the mail we proceeded on our journey past the bed of Martin's Creek and on to Sardine Creek. One of the party discovered, upon arrival at this point, that his hat was missing and some passing travellers reported seeing a felt hat at Jensions farm.

After partaking of some refreshment we continued our journey on to Orbost through less-wooded country. At about four o'clock we arrived at the Commonwealth hotel. During the evening we called upon the local constable, by name, Simpson. A decent fellow, he arranged for a constable to retrieve the felt hat, lost on the previous day. He also produced a pair of boots to replace those destroyed by fire at Goone-Gerah. Altogether he was a good Samaritan.

Orbost, on the Snowy River, 230 miles from Melbourne is the terminus of the East Gippsland railway line.

It is a rich agricultural district, and the maize yield is the finest in Australia.

We left Orbost on the following morning, by goods train but not after considerable trouble with the Station Master, who felt it was stretching a point to allow travellers on the goods train. We travelled to a point three miles from Tostaree in the Guards van. Truly a quaint way of travelling but still very effective. Eventually the train stopped to load sleepers, so we alighted. The engine driver invited us to travel on the tender for a few miles and we jumped up amongst the coal, so on to just outside Tostaree.

Lunch was arranged for us here. Billy was boiled and raisins produced. The wind however, marred the meal blowing viciously from the south. As soon as our wants were satisfied we made for Lake Tyers. Such a bewildering set of cross roads met our party soon after

our venture into the bush, that it was deemed advisable to take the Princes Highway to Nowa Nowa.

We reached Nowa Nowa after a pretty walk of eight miles. Just outside the town we had the good fortune to hear the bellbirds. The strange, tinkling, sounds are pleasingly musical and strongly resemble small silver bells ringing out their delicate notes.

Nowa Nowa we found to be a small strip of land with a road awkwardly straggling through. A hotel, a couple of stores and some fierce looking timber-getters greeted our appearance. We sat down to rest on the hotel stool, outside the dining room. After some argument we decided to remain there for the night. We had scarcely made the decision, when a party of footballers arrived at the hotel. Here was a lucky situation. If they would arrange for our conveyance, there was still a chance of reaching Lakes Entrance that night? So we made overtures to the driver and were eminently successful. In an hour we had driven-portion of the party travelling the footboard-to Mr. Broome's Federal House, Lakes Entrance.

Having arrived so early at Lakes Entrance, we were enabled to stay over the week-end, from Friday till Monday morning, at this very fine Victorian seaside resort.

On the first day we crossed the lake and indulged in some surf-bathing. The afternoon was spent at Scone cottage, about five miles from the Entrance. Afternoon tea is served at the cottage, which is built on an elevated point commanding excellent views of the lakes.

The following day the house party, including Sahib, a civil servant from India, Mr. Leslie a leading tobacconist from Melbourne and Mr. Bastin of Seddon, Melbourne, enjoyed an all day picnic on the Tambo River. The trip up the river was very much appreciated by all, and a halt was made for dinner at Mossiface. After dinner drizzling rain set in. The combined enthusiasm of Harold Fraser and several others in the party failed to avert the chilling influence of the bad weather.

Sunday was spent in a quiet manner, up till four o'clock, when an exhibition of aqua-planing was given by two Sydney visitors. The conditions however were against spectacular displays, and on one occasion a serious drowning fatality was narrowly averted. Owing to the rope attached to the plane breaking, one of the Sydney visitors was precipitated into the lake. His plight was unnoticed for several minutes but eventually assistance was forthcoming, and he was quickly dragged aboard a launch.

After a very pleasant farewell evening, at which several items were given by members of the walking party, preparations were made for an early departure on the morrow.

The boat for Sale duly left the Lakes Entrance wharf at 8 a.m. Several of the party from the house accompanied us on our seventy mile trip. It was a bright and clear morning and the lakes were seen at their best. Lake King and Lake Victoria are first met with. They are similar to our Tuggerah Lakes, perhaps larger in extent. Dinner was served on board and after some further steaming through Lake Wellington we entered the Latrobe River. For about three miles the vessel steams up this narrow river prettily bordered by trees of all descriptions. Much life abounds in the river and many swans, with their pretty cygnets

accompanying them, were met with. The last stage of the journey is taken up the Thompson River, which meets the Latrobe just outside Sale. At three o'clock we reached Sale, and as the train left at four thirty, we made a hasty survey of this important Gippsland capital town.

Leaving Sale by train, we quickly travelled through the rich agricultural districts of Central Gippsland. Arrived at Warragul at about eight o'clock. We made several enquiries from likely people as to the possibility of getting to Nerrim South but all to no purpose. At last one of the party was instructed to interview the local police constable who was doing duty on the station. He turned out to be the most eloquent, obliging, and generally diverting man we met on the tour. After some delay, he arranged an introduction with a Mr. Healy, the licensee of the Nerrim South Hotel.

In an hour we were driven out in the direction of the Baw Baw Mountains and were safely lodged with Mr. Healy's hotel at Nerrim South. At this stage we found one of our party getting rather seriously ill. We scoured the township for a doctor but in vain. Hence a "council of medicine" decided on the sickly one returning to Melbourne, by train, leaving us to push on per boot.

In the very early morn we started out for Noojee, eight miles distant. A strong head wind retarded us somewhat and the signs of approaching rain also added to our discomfort. The road is a good metalled one, and passes through some old established dairy holdings. Away to the North is the mountain region for which we were heading. We obtained some necessary provisions from a local grocer, after disturbing all his family from sleep, and then breakfasted behind the butt of an old gum tree. As rain began to fall lightly we hurried on, and at eleven o'clock we entered the mountain region just outside Noojee. We descended into the valley and reached our objective in time for the mid-day meal. Noojee is the terminus of a branch line from Warragul. It is of very recent origin, and as it depends on the forests for its wealth, the timber industry is strongly represented. In its appearance it is strikingly akin to movie towns so numerous on our film sheets when a small American country town is depicted.

The Latrobe commences its long journey to the Gippsland lakes at a point some few miles at the back of Noojee. It courses through the small settlement at a very rapid rate. After partaking of a very homely meal at the local refreshment room we engaged in conversation with several townsmen. Eventually we learned that the Loch Valley timber train was about to start. We hastily approached the engine driver, a "hard case" who was only too delighted to offer us a seat on the top of the week's supply of oats.

The engine was of the Stephenson period and ran on a very narrow gauge. For eight miles we traversed some very interesting timber country before arriving at Loch Valley, at the foot of the Baw Baw Mountains. During the course of the trip the couplings broke loose on one of the trucks and the train proceeded separately in two different directions. The manner in which the offending trucks were retrieved created a great deal of amusement.

After leaving the cluster of timber shanties which went to make up Loch Valley hamlet, we followed the timber tram-line for a further five miles.

Through dense jungle the line proceeded for about three miles and then rapidly ascended. Giant timber was prominent everywhere. Towards the summit the

undergrowth became less pronounced and finally we arrived at the sawmill. We made ourselves known to the Engineer who invited us to stay in the tin "humpy" for the night. After a frugal meal we spent some time around an immense fire and then retired to our bunks.

A fierce storm occurred during the night the lightning and thunder being very disturbing. A heavy fall of rain also accompanied the storm. The following morning was very discouraging as rain appeared to have set in. During one of the breaks in the weather we made off for McVeigh's, 14 miles on. The track was fairly easy to find, but on account of lack of directions we were doubtful during the day as to our ultimate destination.

It was unfortunate we did not happen on good weather as the walk was a pleasant one. Traversing the mountain we gradually descended through avenues of all descriptions of natural growth. There were very few signs of animal or bird life till we reached the Yarra on the opposite side of the Baw Baws. Our last stage on this part of the journey led us along the river for some miles and about four o'clock very tired and damp we dropped our "swags" on the verandah of the very well conducted guest house known as "McVeigh's" Hotel.

The Seymours, who now conduct this establishment, proved generous hosts, and in addition to providing us with a dry rig-out each, entertained us in a very hospitable manner during our brief stay.

In driving rain we departed early the next morning for Warburton, 22 miles distant. The road in parts is quite good, but after passing McMahon's Creek, half-way to Warburton, it becomes a veritable quagmire. Settlers are practically isolated as traffic is exceedingly difficult and well-nigh impossible.

For the majority of the distance the road follows closely the Upper Yarra and affords some very fine views. Owing to the heavy rains the river was running strongly at the time and at some of the sharp bends presented a very animated scene.

The concluding portion of the walk was along the timber tramway line leading to the Warburton railway station. After a mile or so, we crossed the paddock belonging to the Seventh Day Adventist Society and so on into the progressive mountain resort of Warburton. After some failure with several boarding housekeepers we were successful in getting accommodation at Ballarat House kept by a Mr. Dunphy. Despite our unconventional and mudstained appearance we were made welcome. A hot dinner was soon prepared and so officially our walking tour happily ended.

An early departure was made by train on the following morning. Arriving in Melbourne we made for the "Federal" Hotel. Here a complete change of garments took place. We emerged ordinary citizens with all the marks of the average Australian city-dweller, and passed unnoticed in the busy thoroughfares of the acting capital city.

The following day our party left by the "Zealandia". It was an uneventful trip but nonetheless delightful. A calm sea and a beneficent sun welcomed us back to our native city and thus ended a tour that will be long remembered for its diversity of scenery and innumerable experiences.

This story was given to me by Thais Turner grand daughter of the author, well known member of Bankstown bushwalkers and BWRS (wilderness rescue).



WALKING THE HISTORIC DEUA

By Roger Fryer

The Deua River uncoils like a serpent from a range of rugged rocky mountains which were celebrated in one version of the Man from Snowy River poem:

“And down by Araluen where the stony ridges raise their torn and rugged battlements on high ...”

Araluen is a cute town between Canberra and the South Coast of New South Wales, famous for gold mining, peach growing, and itself situated in the valley of a tributary of the Deua.

Araluen and the Deua Valley were settled by what we could call the “Horseback Culture” of the early 19th Century. Araluen went on through a large gold rush to become a normal farming community with good road access to the Southern Tablelands and the coast.

But the Deua above Araluen, because of the ruggedness of the ranges and the propensity of the river to rise more than 40 feet in its frequent floods, remained accessible only to horse-riders, thus cutting its freehold properties and their owners off from the advance of civilisation.

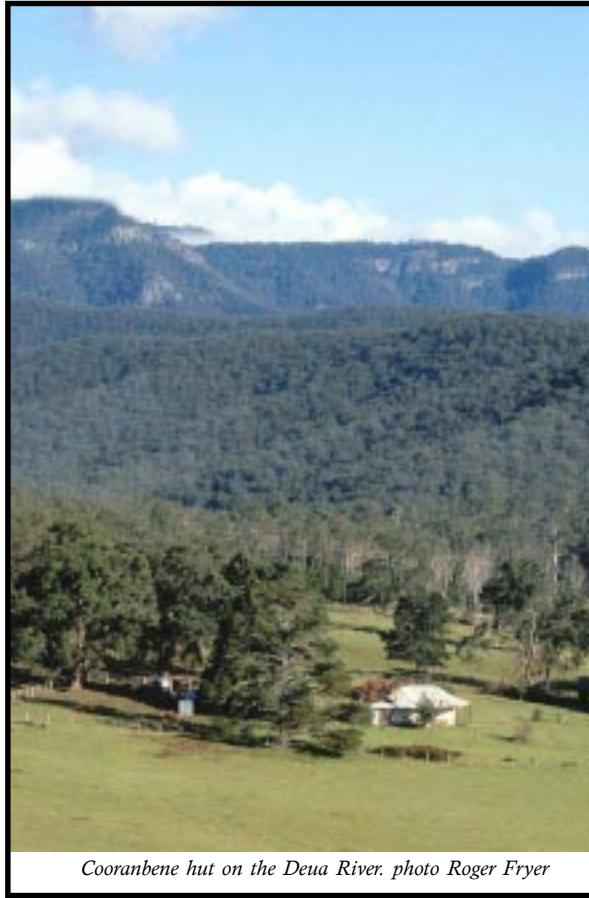
When Deua National Park was proclaimed in the early 1970s, there was left a scattering of residents, the sons and daughters of pioneers, still living this horseback lifestyle on large grazing in-holdings within the park. Their stories have contributed greatly to the rich experience of walking this scenic and challenging wilderness.

The keystone property, Bendethera, (the locals pronounce it ‘Bindithera’) was purchased by the NPWS for the park at the point of gazettal, only a few years after its last resident owner, Iree McCarron, left by packhorse for retirement in Moruya.

Bendethera can be accessed by 4WD from the Krawaree Road via Braidwood, or from the Sugarloaf Road via Moruya, but it is best walked to from Khan Yunis via the Bendethera Caves – one system in the 40-cave karst complex on the limestone of the escarpment.

This makes for a three-day walk out to the Deua River Road or Araluen itself. On the way

down the bridle path along the meandering river, the walker passes through several



Cooranbene hut on the Deua River. photo Roger Fryer

historic grazing properties: “Canoolie”, with a bushwalkers’ hut; “Alpine”, with a pioneer mud-brick homestead; “Cooranbene” with a cattlemans hut; and “Woola” with a pioneer slab homestead and large set of timber cattle yards built by mother-and-daughter pioneers, the Davis’s.

Walking the river involves sections within Deua National Park, and some on public roads, but if you intend walking on private property you should check with the owners first for permission.

Well into his 90s at the time of the park gazettal, Manor Mallon, a pioneer of Deua River cattle station “Merricumbene”, claimed to have witnessed a horse robbery by Ben Hall. Optimistic dating would have made him minus 10 at the time, but he may have been speaking from the memory of tales he was told as a youngster. The famous bushranger did steal a horse from the station as well as robbing the Araluen gold escort.

Within the coil of the Upper Deua lies an isolated property in a valley, which has never been entered by a wheeled vehicle. “Wambandera” is an in-holding purchased for addition to the park in 1984. It is a natural

impoundment on the Burra Creek, a tributary of the Lower Deua, cut off by the walls of the “Mountains of the Moon” and within which up to 200 head of cattle could be held by a mere 15 metres of fence across the Burra gorge.

Wambandera’s isolated and secret location made it a great hiding place for cattle duffers. Rolfe Boldrewood wrote sections of his book “Robbery Under Arms” while staying at Kiara Homestead just downstream of the Burra’s confluence with the Lower Deua. There is no reason to doubt that he heard of, or traveled to Wambandera, and was almost certainly influenced by it as he wrote about “Terrible Hollow”, the hiding place of bushrangers, the Marsdens.

In an amazing coincidence, the real Captain Starlight, who was the model for Boldrewood’s “Captain Moonlight” in the novel, owned a property called “Wombanderry”. But the original title deed for Wambandera, with the name written on it, was issued 20 years before Starlight’s exploits and the writing of Robbery Under Arms. Figure that one out.

In keeping with tradition, we will keep the access to Wambandera a secret; you’ll have to work out how to get there yourself!

Other early Australian literary figures were residents of Araluen, including the poets Henry Kendall, and Charles Harper, who was a gold commissioner for the rich mining fields. The tradition continues to this day with writers from the region including Judith Wright, Roger McDonald, Robin Wallace-Crabb, Jackie French and botanist Val Plumwood, who is famous for surviving a vicious crocodile attack in the Northern Territory.

Originally open dry sclerophyll forest, the Deua Valley has unfortunately grown quite scrubby since free-range cattle running and regular burn-offs have stopped. Repeated ravaging by high intensity bushfires, which have increased in frequency and severity recently due to climate change, have resulted in coppicing of the ribbon gum and river peppermint in many places, while young she-oaks now grow in dense thickets along the river. But much of the intricate and rugged valleys and mountains remain clear and provide interesting, pleasant and challenging walking. CMA 1:25,000 map sheets are Bendethera, Burrumbela, Araluen and Snowball. See details on the NPWS website: www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au.

Roger writes a regular column for a Grafton newspaper rogfryer@bigpond.net.au

RECOMMENDATIONS ON WESTERN ARTHUR RANGE -TASMANIAN WORLD HERITAGE AREA

Over the last few months the Bushwalking And Track Review (BATR) panel set up by the Tasmanian parks and Wildlife service has been considering the future of the Western Arthur Range in the Tasmanian World Heritage Area.

For a number of years there have been divided opinion on how to best manage the impacts walkers have on tracks and the environment. However, the various stakeholders representing bushwalking, conservation, natural science, tourism and angling interests have at last reached agreement. Bushwalkers have a substantial presence on the panel and include representatives from the Tasmanian bushwalking clubs.

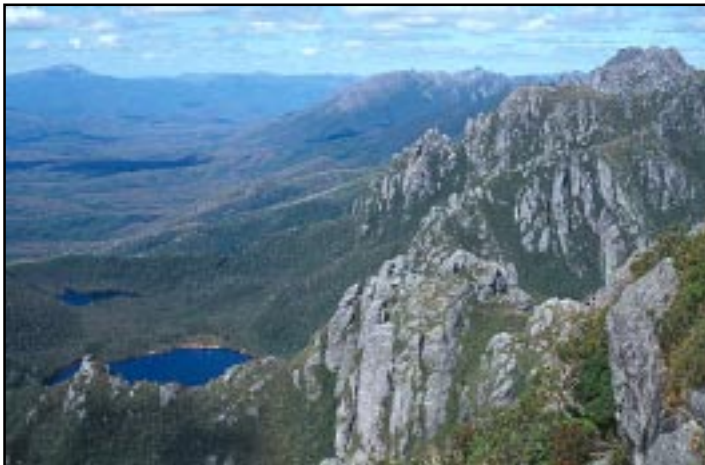
A document detailing what has been agreed upon will be released very shortly to give interested individuals a say in the final outcome. I'll let you know more about this when the report is ready.

Various limits of acceptable change are suggested, accompanied by management actions

by Peter Franklin

depending on the progression of change. For the upper end of the scale the BATR panel is recommending:

· Placing a limit on what are acceptable changes to



Western Arthurs - photo Geoff Wise
www.wises.com.au/wa.htm

the track environment, which if breached will result in a quota being placed on visitor numbers.

· Placing a limit on what is socially acceptable for campsite occupancy, which if breached will result in

daily departure limits being enforced

· Placing a limit on what are acceptable changes to designated campsite environments, which if breached will require campsite hardening.

Funds to repair existing damage to tracks, for the Western Arthur Range and for other areas that need work, is unlikely to be sufficient so the panel is recommending that an overnight walking fee be introduced, probably in the order of \$50 for an adult who walks throughout the year. This suggestion is conditional on government continuing to preserve existing levels of funding.

Because the impacts and usage pattern it was decided to put forward two choices for the type of track at each end the mountain range. The central part is recommend to be kept as a distinct track with modifications primarily for environmental purposes (T3). However for the western end there is an option of T3 or of providing generally modified track surface that includes hardening to make walking more comfortable (T2). Whilst for the better preserved eastern section there is potential to keep it as generally obvious track that may be indistinct in places with minimal modifications and only where unavoidable due to environmental considerations (T4) or to upgrade to T3.

I would be most interested to here any comments.

Anybody interested interested in being kept informed then please email to pfranklin@trump.net.au

Cheers Peter Franklin



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CAMPAIGN FOR BEROWRA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK GAINS MOMENTUM

Local environment groups are mobilising to oppose Hornsby Council's and the NPWS drive for a new Joint Management agreement between Council and the National Parks and Wildlife Service which would involve the abolition of the Berowra Valley Regional Park Trust. The Joint Management Option was agreed in principle at a meeting held at Hornsby Council in June this year. The local community environment groups see this as a further step towards increasing power, control and influence on the part of Hornsby Council on the Management of the Park. NPWS executive staff will not guarantee that a special Park Advisory Committee would be established or that there would be adequate community consultation or input on day to day management decisions under the joint management option.



Since the Draft Plan of Management is not sufficiently explicit the opportunity exists whereby under a joint management agreement in which Hornsby Council has some day to day management influence over the park and where Council may have considerable influence in drafting future POMs, an emphasis could be placed on high impact and damaging uses. If Hornsby Council is sincere in its claims that it is a responsible environmental manager of the Park it will provide human resources and funding to the Park as a National Park.

If a special Berowra Park Committee were established under a joint management regime Hornsby Council would be in a position to select members for the Committee who were sympathetic to Council's drive for high impact use of the Park if the Park remains a Regional Park.

The Parks impressive Ecology- Undeniably, Regional Park Status is the wrong Category, A Major Anomaly

§ The Park supports an impressive bio-diversity and there is very little alteration to the Park's natural condition

§ All other Regional Parks in NSW have been formed from previously cleared and grossly modified land.

§ The nearby Lane Cove National Park with one sixth the size of the Berowra Valley Park at 600 ha., has nearly total urban interface, far fewer threatened species, has polluted waters and receives high visitation impact – and yet is given the status of a National Park. Why?

§ Size can not be used as a reason for BVRP not being given National Park status. The Park is big.

§ Berowra Valley has major water catchment significance.

by Geoff Dowsett for the Redgum Bushland Committee

§ The park contains at least 24 known Aboriginal heritage sites, including artwork, rock engravings, artefacts and habitation sites.

Hornsby Council-Not a suitable Park Manager

The Draft Plan of Management for the Berowra Valley Regional Park is about to be placed before the Environment Minister for approval. The plan is fairly responsible from an environmental perspective in spite of:

1. the considerable pressure placed on the Park Trust by Hornsby Council to change the plan in regard to Stringybark Ridge. Council's Liesure Strategic Plan which still prioritises the development of sports fields and amenities at Stringy Bark Ridge, an ecologically sensitive area of the Park surrounded by an endangered ecological forest community and other threatened flora and fauna species .
2. the imbalance on the Park Trust of representation of three Councillors, one Council Executive staff member and only one NPWS representative
3. the conflict of interest evident where Councillors on the Trust wear two hats
4. Council executive staff had significant input in the selection of the two community representatives.

5. Council has recommended dog walking access to the entire Park which is contrary to the Draft POM

There are a number of fire trails in bushland areas outside the park area under Council's control which could be used by dog walkers if adequately supervised.

The question must be now asked does the NPWS executive represents Hornsby Council or the Berowra Valley Regional Park? The NPWS executive appears to be compliant and subservient in its dealings with Hornsby Council.

The Draft Plan Of Management is suitable for a Berowra Valley National Park

The Draft Plan could apply to the Park as a National Park if the reference to dog walking on four peripheral fire trails is removed and dog walking is totally excluded from the Park. The Park's vulnerability will be exacerbated if a Joint Management Agreement is entered into with Hornsby Council.

There continues to be a very strong positive response to the community wide petition signing campaign for National Park status for the Berowra Valley Regional Park addressed to the Premier through the NSW Legislative Council.

A Regional Park—Serious Dog Abuse—

Failure of Parks Service and Council to Act

Evidence from recent USA and local studies indicate that dog faeces and urine are significant contributors to water pollution through faecal coliform bacteria. There have been a number of problems over the years with unleashed dogs on walking tracks and fire trails in the Berowra Valley Regional Park attacking and/or frightening walkers and joggers.

The reports also refer to the fact that increased

nutrients from dog urine and dog faeces encourage exotic weeds along fire trails and walking tracks and enter creeks and could be responsible for the spread of Roundworm and Giardia. Uncontrolled dogs can and do chase wildlife often leading to fatalities. The presence of numerous dogs causes wildlife to avoid scent marked places and to abandon nesting sites. There have been several reports of wildlife being attacked, mauled and killed by unleashed dogs in the Park.

The Park is currently suffering a considerable abuse from unleashed dog walking and lack of adequate surveillance to stop unleashed dog walking. Signs are needed at Park entry points particularly at Cherrybrook, Westleigh, Pennant Hills, Hornsby and Hornsby Heights warning dog owners of penalties incurred if dogs are off lead.

Funding: Questionable accounting practises

There are numerous instances throughout NSW where local council's assist in funding and/or provide in kind resources to their local National Park. A Memorandum of Understanding between Hornsby Council and the NPWS could be signed to assist in a funding /resources program for a future Berowra Valley National Park.

The 1999 to 2002 Financial Statements which accompany the Berowra Valley Regional Park Trust's 2001 - 2002 Annual Report were not in the view of a former BVRP Trustee to an acceptable accounting standard for a publicly available document. The former Trustee stated in a recent letter to the Premier that they also do not include a proper accounting of the money expended by Council on the Park and Council is mistakenly attributing to the Park expenditure on its Statement of Joint Intent Agreement commitment to clean up Berowra Creek using its Catchment Remediation Rate levy funds.

A Hansard copy of Ian Cohen's MLC speech in the NSW Legislative Chamber on the 25th June '03 is available on the campaign for National Park website at www.berowravalle.org Part of Mr Cohen's speech states that....."The report and statements show that in essence the trust (Berowra Valley Park Trust) is solely funded by the Government, and has been since its inception. The documents show also that all of HSC's documented expenditure on the park was recouped from the trust account. So the major argument for HSC's active involvement in the management of the park—that it makes major contributions in money and kind towards the cost of managing the park—is clearly not supported by the evidence. Therefore, there is no financial advantage for the State Government in Berowra Valley remaining classified as a regional park." Mr. Cohen also states in his speech that—"if the truth be known, **Hornsby Shire Council could be using the Berowra Valley Regional Park as a cash cow to fund other activities in the Shire.**"

PLEASE WRITE, EMAIL, FAX NOW TO THE PREMIER THE HON. BOB CARR at LEVEL 40 GOVERNOR MACQUARIE TOWER 1 FARRER PLACE SYDNEY 2000. or fax 9228 3935 or email bob.carr@nsw.gov.au AND STRONGLY URGE HIM TO DECLARE THE BEROWRA VALLEY REGIONAL PARK A NATIONAL PARK.

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Aid training is worth having for its ability to save lives in all sorts of situations (not just for bushwalks).

BWRS will be running another Senior St John First Aid weekend course on 29th / 30th May, 2004. The training will be 9am to 5pm both days (with the exam held on Sunday afternoon) at Bankstown Sports Club. Training with fellow bushwalkers must be the friendly way to learn First Aid! BWRS needs to be certain of potential trainees so bookings are essential. The (heavily discounted) total cost for the course will be \$100. Booking is only possible by sending the full course fee with a stamped self addressed envelope OR email address (clearly written) to BWRS.

Cheques for the full course fee of \$100 must be made payable to "St John Ambulance" and send to

BWRS Secretary

PO Box 22

CANTERBURY 2193

Remember that bookings will close with the mail of the previous Friday - 21st May 2004.

Full Details of this First Aid course and future dates of St John Ambulance Senior First Aid courses can be found at the BWRS website - www.bwrs.org.au

Other Courses - The St John "Remote Area First Aid" course is a more detailed course that takes either 3 or 4 days, often over two weekends. These courses are run several times per year but not on fixed dates. However, this course is frequently taught mid week. All bookings for these Remote Area First Aid courses must be done through the Sydney Office of St John Ambulance in Surry Hills - for information on Senior and Remote Area First Aid courses, see www.stjohnambulance.com.au

ADVANCE NOTICE - ONE DAY FIRST AID

First Aid training is a really useful skill to have for bushwalks. It gives us the confidence to move further into remote bush areas since we are able to deal with minor medical incidents. Where there are more serious injuries we can stabilise the person and send an accurate description of the signs and symptoms to emergency services.

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However there is always room for improvement. What if you could halve the time to requalify for a Senior St John Ambulance First Aid Certificate. Now the normal First Aid course is two days. Bushwalkers who hold a current (ie unexpired) Senior St John Ambulance First Aid Certificate can requalify in JUST ONE DAY instead of the usual TWO. More time for bushwalking!

In October 2004 the two day, weekend, First Aid training will be replaced by the ONE DAY REFRESHER course to requalify for a Senior St John Ambulance First Aid Certificate. Check your wallet now. Will your current St John Ambulance First Aid Certificate expire just AFTER October 2004?

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RESCUE AT BUNGONIA

Police and ambulance officers have freed a 31-year-old Victorian man trapped for almost 10 hours in a cave near Goulburn, south of Sydney. The man, who has yet to be named, was trapped while caving in the Bungonia State Recreation Area. A police spokesman said the man was part of a group negotiating a series of narrow tunnels within the Acoustic Pot Cave. He slipped after exiting the final tunnel into a drop-down area, falling four metres and dislocating his shoulder, the spokesman said. The rescue was complicated by the small entry to the area where the man fell, requiring Goulburn Police Rescue and specialist paramedics to climb, make an abseil descent then negotiate tight cave conditions, an ambulance spokesman said. The man was brought to the surface shortly before 8pm (AEST), treated at Goulburn Base Hospital and released the next day.



OCTOBER 2003

UPDATE: STATUS OF THE AUSTRALIAN ALPS WALKING TRACK



Bushwalkers are advised that parts of the Australian Alps Walking Track are CLOSED following extensive fire damage earlier in the year.

The following table outlines closures and expected dates of re-opening:

ACT Section – Fire Effected Area (east to west)

Namadgi National Park Access re-opened by:-

Visitor Centre Tharwa to NSW border	Currently Open
NSW Section – Fire Effected Area (east to west)	
Kosciuszko National Park Access re-opened by:-	
NSW border to Kiandra (walking on fire trails & tracks only)	Currently Open
Jagungal Wilderness – Guthega (walking on fire trails only)	Currently Open
Guthega – Charlotte Pass (walking on fire trails, roads & tracks only)	Currently Open
Charlotte Pass – Dead Horse Gap	Currently Open
Pilot Wilderness (walking on fire trails & tracks only)	Christmas 03
Victorian Section – Fire Effected Area (east to west)	
Access re-opened by:-	
Cowombat Flat to Limestone Creek turnoff	1 December 2003
Cowombat Flat Track to Limestone Creek	Easter 2004
Limestone Creek, Mt Murphy, Buenba Flat	Easter 2004

Buenba Flat, Johnnies Top, Benambra Corryong Road	Easter 2004
Benambra Corryong Rd, Morass Creek, Taylors Crossing, Omeo Hwy	Easter 2004
Omeo Hwy, Mt Wills, Long Spur	Easter 2004
Long Spur, Mt Bogong (subsidiary)	1 December 2003
Madisons - Ropers	Easter 2004
Big River Firetrail - Ropers Hut to Warby Corner	1 December 2003
Big River Firetrail – Warby Corner to Watchbed Creek	Currently Open
Cope Aqueducts, Cope Hut, Pole 333, Youngs Top	Currently Open
Basalt Temple, Dibbins Hut, Swindlers Spur	Easter 2004
Derrick Hut, Hotham, Twins Track	Currently Open
Twins-Mt Murray–Mt Murray- Mt Selwyn – Barry Saddle	Easter 2004

Victorian Section – Not Burnt (east to west)

Barry Saddle to Walhalla (Baw Baw National Park)	Currently Open
Users are urged to stay on formed tracks and trails and not to rely on huts or markers and signage.	

For further information visit www.australianalps.ea.gov.au or contact:

ACT: Namadgi Visitor Information Centre, phone: 6207 2900

NSW: National Parks Centre, phone: 1300 361 967

VIC: Parks Victoria Information Centre, phone: 131 963

IAN BROWN
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CONFEDERATION TRAINING OFFICER

The new training officer for Confederation is Ian Svenson. Ian has been walking for many years. In fact he likes to think that he led his first SBW walk at the age of 9 but that's probably pushing it a bit! He is currently training officer for the National Parks Association Sydney Branch.



He has been involved in training at a variety of levels, including a number of years as a high school mathematics teacher. He holds a Masters degree in Education and qualifications in navigation (air and sea), cartography and surveying. He worked for a number of years in the Central Mapping Authority as a cartographer drawing topographic maps.

He recently returned from Western Australia where he ran his own publishing business. While there he was both a Fire Control Officer for the local shire and an ambulance officer with the local ambulance.

Ian has been impressed with the work done by his predecessors, especially Peter Cheetham, in producing the Confederation Training Manuals. He believes, however, that the changed insurance regime means that the time has come to rethink Confederation training policy. He says that Confederation may need to move from being a training provider to a training facilitator, focussing on leader rather than activity training.

He intends inviting club training officers to a round table conference to look at the whole issue, and hopefully develop a set of basic skills and standards for walks leaders. Confederation's role would be to provide a training forum and to help club training officers do their job by supplying materials and certifying leaders in the hope that our insurers, seeing that we take the issue of training seriously, would be moved to be more generous in their insurance provisions.

However, he says the bottom line is that the clubs are in charge. He is there to serve them. If they want it he will try to facilitate it.

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uperb range of
coloured and

black and white photos, printed and mounted with the aid of a local heritage grant, allowed present and past members, as well as the general public, to visit some of the wild and wonderful places where our club has bushwalked, skied, canoed and climbed, over the past forty years.

The early days of the club were marked by adventure and improvisation, with simple gear and clothing, and often quite rudimentary maps. The first programmed walk was for 3-4 February 1962, upper Cotter- Bimberi, an area which is now part of the Bimberi wilderness area of Namadgi National Park. It attracted five walkers. The trip for March 24-25 was a traverse of the Budawangs (grade hard) with separate parties starting from east and west and exchange of car transport. The plan to camp together on top of Mt Renwick (now Mt Owen), proved to be hopelessly optimistic, as the westbound party pitched camp in the dark in the Valley of the Monoliths and didn't catch up with the others till the next morning. They were probably one of the first of many such parties from a variety of clubs, that got "bushed" getting through that terrain. Although the Coast and Mountain Walkers' map was already published, the Budawangs were still remote and it was not always easy even to find the way from the west to Corang Peak.

The Woila country, east of Cooma, still proves a challenge to bushwalkers. A club member Geoff Mosley has described the attempt by a couple of intrepid walkers to explore what was then virtually unknown and unmapped country in the 1960's. (See Wild issue 66, Oct-Dec 1997, p42-7)

The club had been formed at a propitious time, led by young and energetic people who were discovering the advantage of living in Canberra, with ready access to the Brindabellas, Kosciuszko, the Deua and Tross region, the Budawangs and the coast. Rock climbing and orienteering were popular aspects of the club's program as well. The lack of specialist maps provided a challenge: the orienteering maps used then displayed a particular area on a 40 times smaller scale than what is available now, and gave 50 feet contours rather than 5 metres. This no doubt added to the challenge of the event! The rock climbers made trips to Bungonia and the granite rocks of Booroomba in Namadgi. And Mt Coree, a dramatic profile visible to the west of Canberra, became the scene of some memorable days pioneering routes up its rocky buttresses.

The 1970's are important in the club annals for major conservation challenges in both the ACT and Kosciuszko. Many individuals and groups including the National Parks Association and the Canberra Bushwalking Club, the two major conservation groups of the time, lobbied over many years to create a national park in the southern ACT. Two local Liberal members John Haslem and Senator John Knight, were

young, enthusiastic, and keen to show their environmental credentials in what was regarded as traditional Labour territory. Club members

Alan Vidler and Dan Buchler invited them to come as guests of the club on a weekend walk in the Kelly-Gudgenby area (which is now the heart of Namadgi National Park). The walk proved long and strenuous (it would be graded Long/Rough now) and the two politicians must have found it both a challenge and a revelation. When the Namadgi National Park was created in 1978 a couple of experienced NPA campaigners reckoned that that particular trip had brought forward the creation of the park by at least 18 months.

A notable conservation project that the club initiated was a rehabilitation program in severely eroded areas of the Budawangs National Park, in the area around Monolith Valley. Other user groups, the Canberra National Parks Association, Milton NPA and CMW all carried out subsequent work in the Park as well.

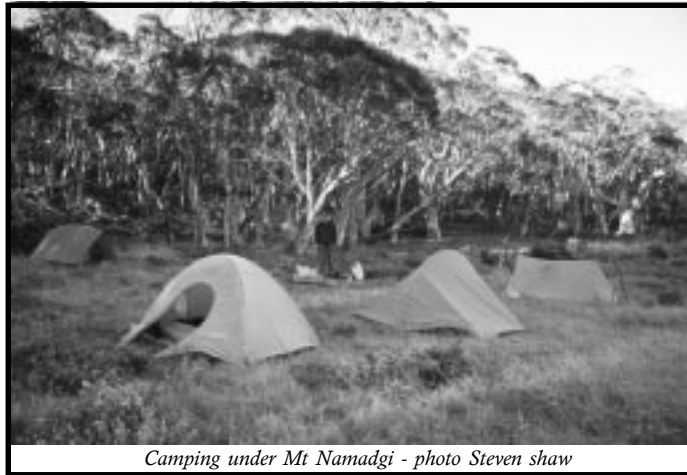
The club continues to be, for many of its 300 or so members, an enjoyable way of getting out into the

past ten years. We hope to also be involved in monitoring recovery of the Alpine Walking Track, whose whole length has been walked by a number of club members.

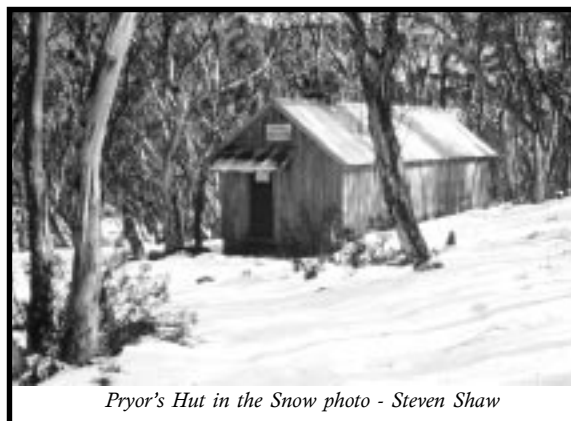
Our favourite club walks are as many and varied as our members. A day walk that many regards as a "classic" is the climb up Stockyard Spur to Pryor's Hut and from there a climb to Mt Gingera, one of the highest peaks in the Brindabella range west of Canberra.

The Namadgi peaks are on our doorstep, so they form an important and much loved backdrop to much of our walking.

interest in being involved with conservation and restoration work after the fires. To this end we will continue to make visits to the upper Cotter Catchment area where the club has been involved in a Broom eradication program for the



Camping under Mt Namadgi - photo Steven shaw



Pryor's Hut in the Snow photo - Steven Shaw

bush, visiting new areas, meeting like minded people and expanding one's physical and mental horizons. The January 2003 bushfires which swept a path of destruction through our suburbs and nearby bushland, had a strong impact on the club. One of our longest

past ten years. We hope to also be involved in monitoring recovery of the Alpine Walking Track, whose whole length has been walked by a number of club members.

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CONFEDERATION'S PRESIDENT'S GREETING

Greetings to all at the beginning of my term as President of Confederation. Unfortunately I was away at the beginning of my term on a trip planned long before I ever thought of taking up the Presidency. However now I would like to begin my tasks, & would like to know what Confederation clubs would like from Confederation. One thing important to many clubs (that is, the majority of clubs who use Confederation's insurance) is still the insurance issue & we are still working away at that in the current very difficult insurance climate. At present we are obtaining a barrister's opinion on some of the legal issues, & intend to hold an insurance meeting with clubs when this comes through.

However there must be other expectations & issues that concern clubs & I am interested to hear about these. My other main hope is that more clubs would become involved in Confederation so that we can all work with some enthusiasm to our common ends. I would like to feel Confederation is relevant to its member clubs, so look forward to hearing your concerns. I can be contacted by e-mail at president@bushwalking.org.au or on 4961 6453. Margaret Covi

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