



MELBOURNE
BUSHWALKERS

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The NEWS

of the

MELBOURNE BUSHWALKERS INC.

FEBRUARY 1999

Internet: <http://www.vicnet.net.au/~bushwalk>

EDITION 560

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PRICE 60 cents

BBQ on the Yarra

Come lilo, canoe, swim or jst lay back and enjoy the peace and quiet of Joan and Ken McMahon's Warrandyte home which backs onto the Yarra River.

A BBQ dinner will follow.

When: Saturday 27th February at 3 pm onwards

Where:

BYO: everything (food, chair, lilo etc)

Contact Ken on _____ or Fiona on _____ for further details.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The club urgently needs an Editor or an Editorial Committee to publish the News.

This is liable to be the last edition of News

Notice

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of
Melbourne Bushwalkers Inc
will be held on

Wednesday 24 February 1999

at 8.00 pm,

in the Horticultural Hall,

Victoria Street,

(enter from the Clubrooms, Mackenzie Street)

**for tabling of Annual Reports
and Election of Office Bearers.**

All Welcome.

Only Members can vote.

Agenda

1. Minutes from the Half Yearly General Meeting 1998
2. Treasurer's Report
3. A motion on Grievance Procedure (Details in January edition of News)
4. Review of Membership fees (see inside)
5. Election of Committee and Office Bearers
6. General Business

FEDERATION DAY WALK

Helpers Needed

21st March 1999

1. If you are able to help in any way, please ring Jean Woodger _____, Pearson Cresswell _____, Max Casley _____ . (see details inside)

From the Editor

This is my last edition of the News as Editor. and the club is still looking for a new Editor. This could be a group of people but if you could help please contact Derrick. I am more than willing to explain the way I do the News and it does not have to be done that way in the future..I will help out for the next couple of months but Peter's job is relocating to Brisbane so we are moving north.

I do the News using Microsoft Word Version 6 and I have templates set up to provide a fairly consistent format which will be passed on. I then print the news on a Laser printer and have the pages ready for copying. Much of the content of the news now arrives on floppy disks or by email which saves a considerable amount of typing and checking for typos. Once you get some practice you will be amazed at how rapidly the contents can be assembled. Also members are very good at contributing material so I never have to go looking for material. I just seems to appear.

I really would like to thank all those members who have sent in contributions over the time I have been editing the News. I find the articles interesting and I'm sure the readers do too.

My only gripe is that even though there is a deadline much arrives at the very last minute. This is usually OK if there is only a few lines from one person but when you get pieces from 10 contributors ... well deadlines should be enforced. Most of this could have been thought about a few days earlier and it would have

made the deadline.

However if you are interested in being involved and working on the News don't be put off if you don't have your own computer. Talk to Derrick about it.

Judy Gipps

From the President

This is my final message as President for the 1998-99 year. The Club has enjoyed another year with a full and well-patronised programme of activities. I trust that you took full advantage of it. You will find reports from key Club officers in this edition of News.

At the AGM this month we elect a new committee. This is an opportunity for you to say who you want to manage the Club's affairs for the next year. We want some new blood so please consider putting yourself forward. There are five general committee places to be filled (without specific duties) and this is a good place to start to learn the ropes. Please talk to me or any committee member if you want to learn more.

The current committee have worked hard to ensure the smooth running of the Club and I thank them all for doing such a good job. I hope to see you at the AGM.

Derrick Brown

Fee Increases

It is proposed to increase the Annual Subscription Fees to the following amounts

Ordinary Members	\$26
Concession	\$18
Couples	\$39
News subscriber	\$15

The above will be discussed at the AGM on 24th February.

The Fees for the Sunday Bus trips will increase to

Ordinary member	\$15
Concession	\$10

applicable from the 1st June 1999.

Meetings are held in the Clubrooms, MacKenzie St., Melbourne
(rear of the Royal Horticultural Society building)
on **WEDNESDAY** Evenings between 7.00pm and 9.00pm.

Visitors are always welcome.

The NEWS is the official newsletter of the Melbourne Bushwalkers Inc. and is published monthly.
Edited by **Judy Gipps**.

Articles, walk reports, poems, snippets of news, reports of new gear, book reviews, letters "to the Editor", advertisements, etc are always welcome. The Editor reserves the right to edit articles, letters or other contributions, where space, clarity or propriety dictate. and to maintain editorial consistency

Please note that articles for **The NEWS** may be :
placed in the **Red Box** in the clubrooms or
mailed to Judy Gipps,
or
faxed to me on

Advertising Rates

¼ Page 1 Issue-\$20; 3 Issues-\$50; 12 Issues (1 year)-\$180

½ Page 1 Issue-\$30; 3 Issues-\$75; 12 issues-\$270

Full Page 1 issues-\$50; 3 issues-\$125; 12 issues-\$450

Only advertisements directly relating to bushwalking will be accepted (eg gear, maps, trips, tours)

Members Ads - FREE

Closing Date for **March 99 News** is **24th February 99**

General correspondence should be directed to:
The Secretary, Melbourne Bushwalkers Inc.
PO Box 1751Q, MELBOURNE 3001

Previews for March Day Walks

Sunday 7th March 1999 **Cumberland River**
Easy/Med & Medium **Sheoak Creek Falls - Lorne**

Leaders: **Alan Miller & Fay Pratt**
Transport: **Bus from Southbank Boulevard at 8.30 am**
Area: **SW of Lorne**
Expected time of return: **7pm**
Approximate length of walk: **14 & 18 Km**
Map Reference: **Lorne 1:25000 (or**
Otways and Shipwreck Coast Leisure map 1:5000

- Notes: 1 Early start at 8.30 am*
2. Change of leader (Alan Miller)
3. There is no easy walk

You will be tired of seeing waterfalls by the end of the day; there should be six of them on the medium walk. Both walks are entirely on maintained walking tracks or 4WD tracks, but some parts will be slippery. Take footwear with plenty of tread. Most of the climbing will be in the morning - we need to gain about 200m from the start at sea level.

Monday 8th March 1999 **Historical Walk**
Easy

Leaders: **Lance Mobbs**
Transport: **Private**

The aim of this walk is to continue the very interesting walks of Athol Schafer. This walk will be along those lines. For information about this walk please see Lance in the clubrooms or ring the Walks Secretary Pearson Cresswell on

Sunday 14th March 1999 **Churchill Island**
Easy & Easy/Medium **Rhyll Wetlands**

Leaders: **Fiona Gallery & Maureen Hurley**
Transport: **Bus from Southbank Boulevard at 9.00 am**
Area: **Phillip Island**
Expected time of return: **7pm**
Approximate length of walk: **8 & 12 km**
Map Reference: **Phillip Island 1:25,000**

Once across the bridge to Phillip Island it's a short drive to the delightful Little Churchill Island. A good track circumnavigating it has been made which goes through a beautiful strand of Moonah Trees (Paperbarks, Melaleucas) and affords pleasant views from all angles. The historic farmstead at the centre is very much worth a visit.

We then have to board the bus again to take us round to the Nature Sanctuary (birds, plants and koalas). Having walked through here we came out near the highest point on Phillip Island which of course we shall scale. After this it's the Phyll Wetlands and a new path that actually goes through the mangrove swamp to the

central channel, then up onto the headlands which we follow right round to Rhyll and a VERY nice coffee shop at the end. A demanding walk this is not, but come with your binoculars and enjoy a walk with lots of differences.

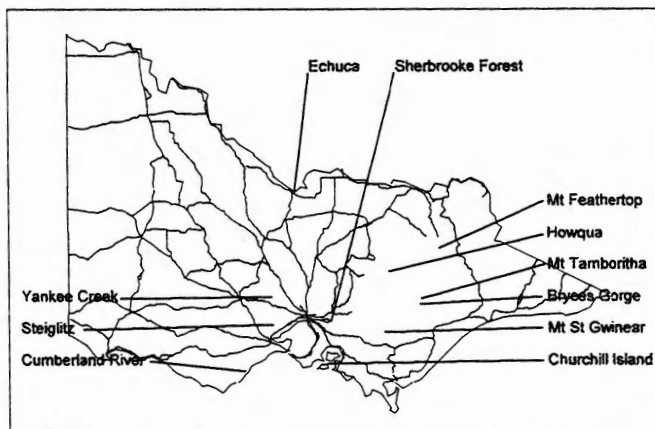
N.B. Possible extra \$5 for Churchill Is. entrance

Wednesday 17th March 1999 **Sherbrooke Forest**
Easy/Medium

Leaders: **Jean Giese**
Transport: **Private**
Area: **Dandenongs**
Expected time of return: **5.30pm**
Approximate length of walk: **14 kms**
Map Reference: **Melways 75 & 124**

Commencing at Grants Picnic Ground, we'll explore parts of the Dandenong Ranges National Park, taking in the upper reaches of Sassafras Creek, the Nicholas Gardens and Sherbrooke Forest. The extra 2 km and another climb is available for the more energetic who would like to visit the Sherbrooke falls.

Meet Grants Picnic Ground (Mel 75 K4) 9.45 or Jean Giese's 8.30



Sunday 21st March 1999 **Federation Day**
Various standards **Steiglitz**

Organiser: **Jean Woodger**
Transport: **Bus from Southbank Boulevard at 8.30 am**
Area: **Steiglitz - Brisbane Ranges National Park**
Expected time of return: **7 pm**
Approximate length of walks: **5 -21 km**
Map Reference: **Eclipse Creek, Lethbridge 1:25,000**

Federation Walks are an opportunity for members of all member bushwalking clubs, and visitors, to meet each other and go bushwalking together. This year we are the hosts, and have put together a program of 20 walks of varying grades and distances. The venue for the day is the Steiglitz Old School Camp, located off

Durridwarrah Road, just north of the town of Steiglitz (Melways Map 511,4D. VicMap 1:25,000 Eclipse Creek GR 520046) .

The camp has parking, toilets, and a hall for shelter and refreshments. There will be displays and stalls for local produce, printed T-shirts, books, etc.

The bus will be leaving Southbank Boulevard at 8.30am, approximate arrival 10.00am with several walks to choose from up until 1.30pm. For people coming by private transport, registration for walks will be at the camp, starting from 8.00am, with the first walk leaving at 8.30am. Walkers are requested to register at least 10 minutes before the time of departure. A fee of \$2 per head will be levied to cover costs.

Steiglitz Historic Park lies within the Brisbane Ranges National Park. The walks will include some of historical interest. Steiglitz was a busy gold mining township with a population of over 1000 in the 1850's and 1890's. Now there are less than 20 residents, one of whom, Phil Dickson, will lead one of the historical walks. Another will be led by the Ranger or deputy from the Courthouse.

While some walks start and finish at the camp, others go further afield and will require transport. The leaders will arrange car pooling where necessary.

Please bring a plate of sandwiches, cakes or biscuits for afternoon tea. With 200-300 people expected during the day, we need all the help we can get with the catering.

All walkers must carry water and lunch. Afternoon tea will be provided (by us!!).

Saturday 27th March 1999	Track maintenance
Easy	

Leaders:	Anne Wilkins
Transport:	Private
Area:	Surprise location
Expected time of return:	Saturday evening

Do you... yes you trusty bushwalker reading this want that feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment, that doing something worthwhile for the environment in the great outdoors kind of vibes ?

Well come along with those upper body muscles at the ready for a fun packed day of track maintenance. Mystery location in a fantastic part of the state... guaranteed good time, and we might even squeeze in afternoon tea on the way home !

Attention all Day and Weekend Leaders

Last year the club purchased some "all purpose" thermal blankets to provide emergency warmth and protection to injured or ill walkers.

Bus leaders will find these blankets on the bus with the 1st aid kits and should carry them on the walks.

Other leaders should contact Jan Palich for an emergency blanket which should be returned to the club the following week.

Leaders, please ensure you have one of these emergency blankets whenever you take a group of people into the bush under your care.

January 1999

EQUIPMENT HIRE

The Club has a range of equipment for hire at a very reasonable rate. For a small deposit you can hire tents, back packs, stoves and sleeping bags.

All lightweight tents are 1 person, (for backpacking trips), however there are some 2 person, A frame tents that although heavier are quite suitable for base camps.

Hire fees are \$10 per w/end for tents; \$5 per w/end for sleeping bags and less for smaller items.

Last year the club purchased a food de-hydrator which renders fruit and vegetables into a strip of piece of very tasty food. The process is easy to follow, with a video and recipes to assist.

If you have any questions on equipment, see Jan on a Wednesday evening, or any Committee Member will be able to help you.

Jan Palich January 1999

For Sale

Macpac Minaret 2 man 4 season 2.6 kg tent. As new \$575.

Early Aiking 70/80 litre single compartment top quality adjustable harness pack. Excellent condition -\$290.

Contact Greg Roberts after hours (no later than 9.00pm please) on

New members

ELFIE BROOKS

Previews for February/March Weekend & Pack-Carry Walks

Mt Buffalo base camp.

The correct date for this weekend trip is Friday 19th to Sunday 21st February. For further information, please contact Rod Novak.

26-28 th February 99	Wilsons Prom in a Day Hard
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Leaders: Bill Metzenthon
 Transport: Private
 Map Reference: Wilsons Prom Outdoor Leisure Map)
 Distance: 40km
 Area: Wilsons Prom

This traditional gallop takes in Sealers Cove, Refuge Cove, Waterloo Bay, Oberon Bay and back to Tidal River - all in one day. It is strictly for the fast walkers, but expect to have a few swims along the way.

26-28 th February 1999	Wilsons Prom Sealers Cove Circuit Medium
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Leader: Pearson Cresswell
 Transport: Private
 Area: 220 km
 Expected time of return: 8 pm
 Approximate length of walk: 38 km
 Map Reference: Wilsons Prom National Park 1:50,000

It's time to revisit this classic Wilsons Prom walk - one of the great walks in Victoria. We will camp at Tidal River on Friday night then via Sealers Cove to Refuge Cove for Saturday night. Sunday is over Kersop Peak to Waterloo Bay, then back to the cars. Fantastic views, lots of swims.

It is a fairly long walk (38km) but all easy going so suitable for newish overnight walkers provided you are fit. Party limit is 8, so book early.

5-8 March 1999	Murray River Echuca to Cohuna Canoeing Easy
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Leaders: George Zamora
 Transport: Private
 Area: Echuca Torrumbarry Weir
 Map Reference: River Murray Charts -
Maureen Wright

Approx Distance from Melbourne: 250km

This trip will REALLY happen this time. It has been postponed because of Annual Speed Boat Races on the Murray River. So come and explore the Murray River wonders, beautiful beaches and natural bush setting, with lots of swim.

Sleep under the stars on the warm summer nights, or swim in the nude on the warm Murray River waters.

You can come early Friday and spend time exploring the historic port of Echuca. At the Port of Echuca, the charm of Australia's rich colonial heritage is evident everywhere. You savour the spirit of the riverboat days. Look beyond the busy street, past the bustle of horse drawn carriages and the old steam operated red gum sawmill and there sits the historic Echuca wharf, built in 1865. Echuca holds a place in history as Australia's busiest inland port during the late 1800s.

On Friday night we will camp in one of the beaches in Moama (across the river from Echuca).

On Saturday we start our paddle downstream to the Torrumbarry Weir. The next two nights we will camp along the river, where we see nice beaches (and there are plenty on this trip). We should arrive at our destination on Tuesday afternoon after smooth water paddling all the way.

For those people who have been on previous canoeing trips, this is a completely new area, it has never been explored by our club, the local residents around Echuca say "is one of the nicest places on the river", the paddle steamer have regular weekends to this area with tourists.

You will see magnificent River Red Gum Trees, kangaroos and many types of birds, and you will see people swimming in the nude (warning: This is not recommended for people with heart problems, you may look the other way). Beautiful camp sites will provide a trip to remember. It will be an easy trip with lots of swim stops plus lunch and afternoon breaks.

WARNING: It will be hot - old pyjamas or loose cloths and plenty of +15 and a hat! We will hire two person Canadian canoes, which are supplied with life jackets, waterproof barrels and detailed amps. A non refundable deposit of \$10 will be required to secure the canoes great adventure and a photographer's dream.

THIS TRIP IS A MUST. Book at the club rooms or ring on (AH) or (BH)

5-8 March 1999	Feathertop Razorback Easy/Medium
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Leader: Jean Giese
 Transport: Private
 Area: Hotham/Feathertop
 Expected time of return: 7 pm
 Approximate length of walk: 36 km - 20 without packs
 Map Reference: Bogong Alpine Area
(Outdoor Leisure Map) 1:50,000

Start 9.30am, 6th March at beginning of Razorback Track on Alpine Rd and walk the 8km to camp on

Diamantina Spur. Collect water from the spring below Mt Feathertop (6km return)

Day 2 With day packs, visit Federation Hut and MUMC hut, climb and have time to enjoy Feathertop, North Peak and part of the North Razorback.

Day 3 Return to cars via Razorback. Some passengers could go down Bungalow Spur and be collected in Harrierville if they like. Pace will be easy.

5-8 March 1999	Bryces Gorge
Medium/Hard	

Leaders: Jerry Grandage
Transport: Private
Area: Gippsland North of Licola
Approximate distance from Melbourne:
Expected time of return:
Approximate length of walk: 22 km
Map Reference: Tamboritha-Moroka 1:50,000

Not a walk for the inexperienced or fainthearted. The route will be Dimmick Lookout - Mt Darling Saddle - part of the Mt Darling ridge - turn left down to Conglomerate Creek, which we follow upwards, eventually through Bryces Gorge to Howitt road. The gorge involves some "interesting" rock scrambling in exposed situations. When I did this walk with the VMTC last year we encountered a nest of angry European wasps and were attacked.

I shall be in NZ until 1st March, so please refer to Pearson for further enquires on this walk.

Note: Upper limit of 10 people.

12-14 March 1999	Mt Tamboritha
Medium	The Crinoline

Leaders: Cameron McMillan
Transport: Private
Area: Gippsland North of Licola
Expected time of return: 10 pm Sunday
Approximate length of walk: 23 km
Map Reference: Tamboritha-Moroka & Licola-Wellington 1:50,000

We shall meet at Tamboritha Saddle at 8 am Saturday, and do a 42 km car shuffle before starting from Tamboritha Saddle. We climb Mt Tamboritha (1509 m) for what should be great views. Continuing along an old 4WD track for about 4 km we arrive at the Long Hill Walking Track, passing a rock shelter which makes a good lunch spot and from where you can look down onto the Caledonia River. Camp will be made further on near a tributary of Long Hill Creek.

Next day we will climb The Crinoline, Mt Sugarloaf and Bruni Knob, then descend 480 m down a steep

walking track to finish on the Macalister River a spot suitable for a cooling dip.

This is a good time of year for the walk, long days but the worst of the heat and insects gone.

12-14 March 1999	Bogong National Park
Easy	Work Party

Leaders: Sylvia Ford
Transport: Private
Area: N.W. Victoria
Expected time of return: 8 pm Sunday
Approximate length of walk: not much
Map Reference: Bogong Aline Area Outdoor Leisure Map

This annual event is our good deed to help the Alpine National Park along. The park ranger lines up some task for us often piling us into the back of his ute to be ferried to where ever it's happening. In the past we've done track maintenance, one one occasion planted snow poles and on another cleaned up and repaired a cattlemens hut. We stay at Wilkie sharing transport up on the Friday night. It's lots of fun and an ideal opportunity to sample the delights of the Bogong High Plains.

20-21 March 1999	Federation Day Walk
Easy & Easy/Medium	Organisation

Leaders: Jean Woodger
Transport: Private
Area: Steiglitz

See day walk previews

26-28 March 1999	Stronachs Camp
Easy	St Gwinear

Leader: Max Casley
Transport: Private
Area: Erica - Walhalla
Expected time of return: Sunday Evening
Approximate length of walk: 22 km
Map Reference: Baw Baw National Park (VMTC) 1:50,000

This is an easy walk across the beautiful Baw Baw plateau, on tracks with good campsites and views. As such it is an excellent introductory walk for weekend backpacking. We start at Stonachs Camp on Saturday morning and will camp at the site of a ruined hut near Mt Whitelaw. On Sunday we go over Mt St Phillack and Mt St Gwinear.

A stove is needed for cooking as fires are not allowed on the Baw Baw plateau. The club has a couple for hire.

Treasurer's Report for the year ending 31st Dec 1998

All receipts and payments are divided into five sub accounts. The years performance for each is as follows

	Year Profit/(Loss)	Year End Balance
Club	(\$1,348.00)	\$6,347.45
Wilky	(\$6,340.44)	\$11,475.24
Walks	(\$1,313.50)	\$10,014.27
Special	\$1,850.00	\$21,850.00
Publicat.	\$87.00	\$1,497.33

Overall the club made an operating loss of \$5238.84. This was due in part to payments made towards the one-off 100,000th Walker Celebrations, a \$5,000 donation to the VNPA in memore of G. Taylor, monies spent on Wilky, and an increase in the Sunday Bus costs. The clubs current equity stands at \$58,019.39.

Anne Wilkins 1-Feb-99

Wilkie Report

During winter, of the possible 14 weeks usgae Wilkie was used by 12 groups. These ninety six people produced a revenue of nearly four thousand dollars.

For the rest of the year tenancy has been fairly steady especially during the late spring, summer and last year's autumn.

Work parties have done much cleaning up, bringing in the year's supply of wood, installing things like the chain, a cover on the bench seat and another shelf in the woodshed. The fire extinguishers have mostly been replaced and a fire blanket installed. Pillows and cushions are being renewed and a flash knife set is on site. A re-decorating program has started - so far the loft ceiling has been done.

Renewing the roof has been put off for a while longer, and new mattresses are on the agenda eventually too. With the large donation to the National Park we are making an impression on our nest egg.

Sylvia Ford

Membership Secretary's Report 1998

The Membership Secretary's regular duties include:

- the maintenance of the register of members' particulars (address, 'phone, subscription status)
- the collection of subscriptions
- giving advice about membership to potential or new members
- assisting in the preparation of membership lists and in mailing the News

As at the beginning of February 1999, the membership of the Club was 488 (1998: 488) including 11 Life and 10 Honorary members.

The number of members remained static during 1998 with 69 new members (1997: 84) joining and the same number (1996: 79) of members relinquishing their membership.

In parallel with the activity of Margaret Borden, who responds to enquiries received on the Club's 'phone number, the Membership Secretary responded to postal enquiries, some 20-30 over the year, by mailing walks programmes and other information about the Club.

Members would help very much if they could let the Secretary know as soon as practicable when their address, home or work 'phone have changed. It has happened that quite suddenly, the News have started returning with a "Not at this address" stamp. Also, prompt payment of 1999 subs within the subscription period (within 3 months after the AGM, that is the end of May) would be greatly appreciated. To help as a reminder as necessary, the mailing label during these months will carry a discreet 'SubsDue' message which no longer appears once you have paid.

Social Secretary's Report for 1998

	Attendance
Opera in the Park	26
BBQ on the Yarra	25
Imax Theatre	60
Afternoon Tea & Pyjama Party	18
8 Film nights & Dinners	10-30
Vegetarian Dinner	20
5 Slide nights in Clubrooms	(always popular)
100,000 Walker Bushdance & Spit Roast	80
Christmas Party	150 plus!!

Thank you to all our members who have participated and made our events such a success.

Marisa Social Secretary

The Melbourne Bushies Search & Rescue Team

Many Bushies would not be aware that the Club plays an active role in Search and Rescue efforts throughout Victoria through the participation of several of its members in the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs (FVWC) Search and Rescue Section. These hardy Club members, skilled in the arts of bushcraft, are effectively "on call" for major Victorian search and rescue efforts in which someone is lost in the bush.

Typically a call out occurs late at night (2.00 AMish) when one of the Club's contacts, having been themselves contacted by a Police Liason Officer, does a ring around to see which members are available for that

particular search. Having been roused from their sleep, the Club member stumbles around his/her abode gathering enough gear and food together to spend three days camped out in the bush. Some gear to make stretchers and clear tracks is also taken. Being organised people, members have this food and gear set aside and ready for use. Next it's to the Dawson Street Police Station to join other bushwalkers and then Police bus to the headquarters of the in-the-field search site. Once there, the Police Search and Rescue Squad run the whole show in a highly organised fashion.

The amount of resources the Police Search and Rescue squad can bring to bear in any given search is quite impressive (not to mention costly for the taxpayer). There will usually be one and sometimes two helicopters, a posse on trail bikes, a few 4WD's, several groups on foot carrying packs and the all-important catering unit – and that's just the Police. Then there are the volunteers: 30 or more FVWC bushwalkers and oodles of SES with their 4WD's. Sometimes specialist volunteer groups are called out – such as the Birkenbeiners if it's a skier lost. Channel Seven and Ten helicopters often turn up trying to outdo each other in spotting the lost person before anyone else does.

A search which I attended, together with Stephen Down and Mark Walters, in the Autumn of 1994 was a trenchant lesson in what any bushwalker should NOT do on a trip should they become lost. The person lost was Judge O'Shea of the Arbitration Commission and the area we were searching in was around The Twins and Mt St Bernard in the general vicinity of Mt Hotham. Judge O'Shea made several basic errors:

- He went a trip alone
- He gave relatives/friends no precise indication of where he was going and no precise estimate of when he would be back.
- Once lost he did not stay put, but wandered around trying to walk his way out.

The consequences that arose from these errors of judgement were potentially fatal:

- The start of the search was delayed until relatives realised belatedly that Judge O'Shea should have returned
- The search was difficult to organise as all that was known was the location of his vehicle and not where he was going
- As a result of trying to walk his way out of difficulty he became exhausted, fell over and smashed his glasses that, coupled with the onset of hypothermia, greatly disoriented him.

Happily, the Judge was found on the fourth day of the search (the day after Mark, Stephen and I finished our three day stint). However, he had severe hypothermia,

was badly bruised from his fall and had extensive lacerations around his legs. He was unable to talk when found.

Superhuman levels of fitness are not required to join the FVWC Search and Rescue team. What is required is:

- A high degree of self-reliance (independence) in the bush, ie. having all the gear necessary to camp out in the bush for three days, navigation skills and a moderate level of fitness
- A sympathetic employer that tolerate a very rare three days absence with little notice
- Willingness to be a team player and do the bit allotted to you without diversion

New members are always being sought for the FVWC Search and Rescue Section. Training courses and practices are run regularly and visitors are warmly welcomed. By participating in a practice day (upcoming events will be advertised in News) Club members can gauge whether Search and Rescue membership is for them and perhaps improve some of their bush skills at the same time. For more information contact your Club delegate – Peter Chalkley.

The Club's Search and Rescue members currently are: David Brett, Peter Chalkley, Alan Clarke, Stephen Down, Gina Hopkins, William Metzthen, Stephen Rowlands and Mark Walters. Special mention must be made of the Club's contacts who are also essentially "on call" and play a key role in any Search and Rescue by phoning up sometimes grumpy Search and Rescue members and drumming up the numbers.

Peter Chalkley

DO IT YOURSELF TREKKING IN NEPAL

by Jopie Bodegraven

During October and November last year Jen and I spent over 5 weeks in Nepal, 4 weeks of which was spent trekking the Annapurna region, the most popular trekking region in the country. It was a wonderful experience for many reasons; the spectacular alpine scenery, the glorious autumn weather, the contact with a culture and people so different to ours and the friendships made with fellow trekkers. And it was cheap, especially after spending time in Europe where doing things on a budget requires great self control and ingenuity.

Nepal can be trekked in a variety of ways. The most expensive is to book a trek with a company based in Australia. Then comes booking a trek directly with a company in Nepal. Next is to hire a porter and/or guide. Cheapest of all is to carry your own gear, sleeping and buying meals at the lodges en route. No prizes for guessing which we chose, and having done it we can say that for anyone with reasonable fitness, it is easily the

best option. The only limiting factor is the area where you can go because you can only go where there are sufficient lodges. Luckily this includes the most popular areas.

There are 3 areas which you can trek on your own unaided. They are the Annapurna region, the most popular and easily accessible of all and arguably the most beautiful, the Everest region, also known as the Khumbu or Solo Khumbu region which is spectacular and has the attraction of the highest peak on earth and finally the Langtang Region. Beyond these areas you at least need porters because you will need to take camping gear and food and in several "Restricted" areas you can only go on an organised commercial camping trek.

The Annapurna Range soars to over 8000 metres. Although it is part of the main Himalaya chain it is not the main watershed. That is further north in Tibet. Two major rivers, the Marsyangdi and the Kali Gandaki, drain the northern slopes of the Annapurnas and curl around the east and western sides of the massif en route to the Ganges in India. The upper reaches of both of these valleys are consequently in a profound rainshadow. You have a choice of 2 major lodge treks here. The longer is the Annapurna Circuit, a 16 plus day epic going up the Marsyangdi Valley, over a pass at over 5400 metres and down the Kali Gandaki. The change in the vegetation as you go in and out of the rainshadow area is astounding not to mention the change with altitude. The other is the 11 day trek in to the Annapurna Sanctuary, an almost enclosed basin at over 4000 metres surrounded by peaks soaring 2500 to 4000 metres above you in the heart of the Annapurnas. There are also variations on these 2 main routes. We being rather keen and having the time did both the circuit and the sanctuary in one magnificent 4 week event.

Nepal is not the west but luckily it is also not India. It is plagued by corruption, nepotism and bureaucratic red tape. To get our trekking permit we could either do it ourselves through their department of Immigration and endure the queues and delays or we could have it organised for us by our hotel or a trekking agency for an extra fee of US\$15. The bulk of this is direct bribes to the so-called public servants to bypass the normal red tape. Very little foreign aid money gets to its intended destination to the frustration of foreign aid donors. In Bangkok we were bumped off our flight to Kathmandu and put up in a hotel for the night along with 40 others because someone had paid a big enough bribe to someone else in Royal Nepal Airlines to get a large tour group onto the flight ahead of us. Corruption is an ingrained facet of Nepali culture which must be changed if Nepal is to overcome its many problems. Having said

that, we found money changing to be easy and straight forward. The hassling from people trying to sell you things and services as you walk around the tourist areas of Kathmandu is a pain but you get used to that. Prices of food and accommodation in the trekking areas are fixed which is a great relief to everyone and the Nepali people on the whole are pleasant and friendly. Travellers arriving from India come with tales of desperate hassling by desperate people and fearful experiences with bureaucracy and unanimously regard Nepal as a friendly easy going place to come and relax!

Kathmandu is a fascinating city and is worth two days of exploring but too much longer and the pollution and noise gets to you. The old creaky and totally out of tune traffic belches noxious fumes mercilessly and the drivers communicate by blasting their horns incessantly. No EPA here! Anyway there's wonderful unpolluted and noise-free trekking to be had so let's go

To get to our starting point we had to take a bus. We duly followed recommendations and took a tourist bus. A look at the dilapidated and crowded local buses confirmed our choice as a wise one. Evidently the road toll is horrific and night buses are especially deadly. Our driver out of Kathmandu was quite good but the testosterone-charged budding grand prix aspirant we had on the return had us reappraising the wisdom of bus travel.

Once off the main drag we started encountering police checkpoints, which we strongly suspected were there as much to provide employment as to keep track of foreigners whereabouts. We'd heard rumours of dire consequences if we missed one and miss one we duly did because it was so unobtrusive. Nervously we waited to see the reaction of the "ogres" at the next one but in true Nepali fashion they were quite friendly and couldn't have cared less

The lodge accommodation is very basic but on the whole, quite adequate. Rooms can be twin, triple or dormitory and the beds have hard bases with foam mattresses from one to four inches thick. No saggy springs and no bed bugs. Toilets are very variable with some being positively disgusting and some up market lodges having flush loos. Most are vaguely acceptable but smelly pit loos. Food has improved markedly from the old staple dahl baht and include pastas, pizzas, eggs, potatoes, soups, yak cheese, local vegetables, apple pie, chicken, pancakes and much more. Local apples & oranges add some variety. Bottles of Coke and fanta are universally available if you're crass enough to overlook the fact that the full bottles are carried in on the backs of porters carrying 60 kilo loads and then the empties are carried out again. You can always buy mars bars and snickers too.

Which brings me to the issue of spelling. We would make similar mistakes of course if we were writing menus in French but we couldn't help laughing quietly when we were offered a sandwich, jasmine tea, special cupchino, impropriet alcohol, coc nag, chicken skitnetzel, pencaks, freaid potto, cinemon tea, snakers roll and several varieties of breakfast. Enough of that; back to the serious stuff. My priorities in choosing a lodge were to check the length of the bed, cleanliness of the toilet and its ease of access. In one lodge early on, to get to the smelly loo out the back you had to go through the Nepali house which was OK during the evening. Five o'clock in the morning I woke up with an urgent case of the shits, the result of something I had eaten for dinner. I fled downstairs to be confronted by a locked door barring access to my desperately needed destination. In response to my frantic efforts to tear the door off its hinges, the bleary eyed lady of the house opened the door whereupon I rocketed through and out the back but alas; too late. I spent the next ten minutes cleaning up the mess. It was a learning experience.

It pays to be paranoid about cleanliness. We had a water purifier for cold water and kept away from meat, fish and salads. Lots of people get diarrhoea, stomach upsets and goodness knows what else but apart from two minor cases, I was OK and Jen had no problem at all.

It's very enjoyable to get into the routine of walking, enjoying the magnificent scenery, chatting to fellow trekkers, choosing a restaurant for lunch, saying Namaste, which is Nepali for hello and greetings, to all the porters and other Nepalis on the track, choosing a lodge, having a look around the village, choosing your dinner and having a good sleep because you are pleasantly tired

My only really bad night's sleep was at Thorung Phedi, the lodge at 4,420 metres where you spend the night before you climb the 1000 metres to Thorung La Pass and descend the 1700 metres to the accommodation on the other side. The lodge which has beds for about 200 had probably 250 people there. Quite a few people had symptoms of altitude sickness, mainly headaches. We had no headaches because we had taken our time and acclimatised well, but the lack of enough oxygen is probably what kept me awake. If I dozed off my breathing would slow down and my efforts to get more air would wake me. Add to this the fact that people were getting up from 3 am onwards for early pre dawn starts and you can see why sleep was hard to come by.

Climbing up to the pass at such a high altitude was a slow plod but given sufficient acclimatisation and sufficient time, it was relatively problem free. It was spectacular and a real buzz and we celebrated with a cup of milk tea and a bowl of noodle soup from the very

basic teahouse right at the pass. The next day we declared a rest day, one of the advantages of independent trekking. You are not having to keep up with a group. This can be important for altitude acclimatisation too. The majority of deaths and severe altitude problems occur to people in organised groups who feel under pressure to keep up when they should either stop for a day, backtrack temporarily to a lower elevation or simply go back.

A word on costs. Buses from Kathmandu to and from the trek came to about \$17 Australian. The trekking permit plus Annapurna Conservation Area fee for 5 weeks was \$71 plus \$24 facilitation fee (bribes). Food & accommodation on the trek came to about \$13 a day. In Pokhara, the town where most people spend a few days of well deserved R&R after the trek it was \$15 Accommodation in Kathmandu was about \$9 a day each with food another \$12. A taxi to the airport is \$5 and airport departure tax was about \$23

On the Annapurna trek we found a guide to be totally unnecessary. Many people who employ one regret their decision when they realise how easy it is to look after yourself. In fact having one can lead to, loss of independence and power struggles as we observed and were told about. The only guide you need is the Lonely Planet or a similar book and chats to fellow trekkers. A porter could be useful for some but can still be a millstone around your neck quite apart from the insurance implications. Your gear shouldn't need to exceed 9kg. Leave the rest at your hotel in Kathmandu

Having thoroughly enjoyed our do it yourself trek in the Annapurnas, we can see ourselves going back sometime in the future and doing the Everest region and maybe Langtang as well. I hope I have interested some of you to give it a go too

Australia Day Weekend at Walhalla 28/1/99

Saturday Night after we had arrived it began drizzling rain, however Sunday lived up to true Walhalla weather patterns of all 4 seasons in one hour. Nine walkers took a "walk on the wild side" withlan from Thomson Station to Erica and return along the newly opened Rail Trail. This was a very pleasant walk through Mountain Ash and tree ferns and then a challenging climb down to the outlet of Horseshoe Tunnel on the Thomson River. Many of the group partook in an invigorating swim in the river and enjoyed talking to two girls who were "rafting" down the river. Sunday dinner was a splendid banquet of shared "culinary delights" including some sensational dishes. Three of the group had done their won thing on Sunday including a visit to Taralgon and a "Cultural Exchange: with some locals, especially with "BILL"

We all left Walhalla Monday morning to drive to Mount Erica but were delayed when Miriam's car gave up the ghost. After some repairs by Ian and myself we were able to finish the car shuffle and start our walk. The walk was from Mt Gwinear to Mount Erica taking in some sensational scenery along the Alpine Walking Track. The weather was perfect for walking and the wild flowers were lush and spectacular. Monday concluded with an outdoor pub meal and a campfire at Ian's cottage. Tuesday was saluted with as many flags as we could find around the Walhalla township and visited the cricket ground and fascinating original POST OFFICE. Overall a thoroughly enjoyable weekend, thanks to Ian for the use of his cottage

and to everyone for their friendship and sharing, particularly the stocking and lipstick/

The group consisted of, "Quiet" ILSA, MARGO "The Scribe", "Affable" Andrew, "BONDING" Margaret, "HISTORIC" Ian, "FANGIO" MIRIAM, "McDonalds" Joanne, ATHLETIC" ALAN, FIXY" JENNY, SCIENTIFIC" SIMONE "COUNTRY" TRACY and "DIDG" Brian Due to the 26th Jan Public Holiday being on Wednesday next year we won't have another "Lodge" weekend at Walhalla until Jan 2001. Book Early !!

Brian Crouch

FEDERATION DAY WALK 1999 Sunday 21st March 1999

No.	Start	Walk Description	Grade	Km	Hrs.
1	08:30	Steiglitz - Anakie Gorge - Steiglitz	M/H	21	7
2	08:30	Bostock Reservoir - Ballan Mineral Springs	M	16	6
3	09:00	Staughton Vale - Anakie Gorge - Steiglitz	M/H	21	6
4	09:00	Steiglitz-Sutherland Ck-Yankee Gully-Grahams Gully-Steiglitz	M	15	5
5	09:00	Northern Brisbane Ranges: Spring Creek - Sapling Gully	E/M	13	6
6	09:30	Moorabool River - Sheoaks	M	13	6
7	09:30	Bamganie State Forest	E/M	12	4
8	09:30	Anakie Gorge - Steiglitz	M	14	5
9	09:30	Anakie Gorge-Picnic Area Circuit	E/M	12	5
10	09:45	Steiglitz - Old Mill Camp -Kinglock Mine - Native Youth Track	E/M	16	4.5
11	10:00	Northern Brisbane Ranges: Boar Gully Circuit	E	7	4
12	10:00	Beards Gully - Deadmans Loop	M	11	5
13	10:00	Bamganie State Forest	M	14	5
14	10:30	Steiglitz - Crossing Picnic Area - Steiglitz	E	8	4
15	10:30	Moorabool River	E/M	10	4
16	11:00	Historical Walk: Steiglitz Town	E	5	2
17	11:00	Steiglitz - Yankee Gully Rd - Kinglock Mine - Cemetery	E/M	14	4
18	11:30	Historical Walk: Steiglitz Mines	E	5	3
19	12:00	Steiglitz - Miners Tk - Sutherland Creek - Deadmans Loop	E/M	9	3
20	13:30	Historical Walk: Steiglitz Town	E	5	2

ACTIVITIES

ACCESS

- Walks of different grades and distances to suit everybody.
- Historical walks exploring the Steiglitz Historic Park.
- Display & discussion of the Phytophthora Root Rot fungus. This is a serious problem in the Brisbane Ranges National Park. Walkers will learn more about it, see the effects and learn how to minimise the spread of the disease.
- Stalls for local produce, books, etc.

An early indication of numbers from clubs participating would be appreciated.

The venue for the day is the STEIGLITZ CAMP, located off Durdidwarrah Road, just north of the town of Steiglitz. [Melways Map 511, 4D. VicMap 1:25,000 Eclipse Creek GR 520046] To get there travel:

- From **Ballarat** via Meredith.
- From **Geelong** via Maude or Anakie.
- From **Melbourne**, allow about 1 hour from the western fringes:
 - (1) via Western Highway to Bacchus Marsh, then turn south to Anakie.
 - (2) via Princes Highway (Geelong Road) to Lara, then head west to the Geelong - Ballan Road, turn right and follow signs to Anakie.
- From **Anakie**: follow De Motts Road, turning left at the junction with Butchers Road and right at the junction with the Steiglitz-Maude Road. In Steiglitz follow signs to the camp. **CAUTION: De Motts Road is narrow and winding in places. Take Care.**

Kosciuszko 1998 - 1999

This is not a detailed rehash of a trip. Rather it is a collage of impressions.

After a long drive, Olsens Lookout was to give good views, but we got swirling mist and cold showers. Geehi Dam was not especially friendly, with the best water from a tap, and a cold night. A cold morning's walk to Diane Hut, a haven in the snow and 4°C temperature. The tiny hut warmed to 30°C and the door was opened to let in cool. The ladies had the bunks, David had the floor, and I copped the airlock. A midnight exit nearly trepanned me.

Cool, fine, road and track, then light scrub, cold west wind that demanded at least a parka. Most had three or four layers. Chase the route over the Rolling Ground to a good camp on Tate. Disappearing tracks to Anton, cut behind Twynam, pools scintillating in the noon light, campsites behind rocks invite, down to Blue Lake and a track. Grind through the masses to a National Park census: several hundred that day. Camp beside a snowdrift above a hidden waterfall at Carruthers.

Day trips to Townsend and Albina, fine and cool in the clear sky. Peer into Lady Northcotes Canyon: possible, but not today. Back at camp, laze in the clean air, a quick swim, crosswords and word puzzles. Helicopter. Then trail bikes break the skyline on Carruthers. Rescue? Clouds roll in, ominous

Cool start over Twynam, good views all over. Down the roller coaster to the valley, then up to Tate, with a welcome shady wall. Lunch, then a hollow around the corner beckons. The New Years Eve campsite is fantastic: shelter on three sides, 360° views, just below the summit. Wind and clouds from all over, mainly the open side, mainly on one tent, which cracks in the wind. The other tent shivers lightly. Good sunset, but bother, just two frames left for sunrise.

Not a problem, sunrise is cold and too hard to capture. Rolling Ground, Granite Peaks and Dicky Cooper. Helicopter hovers - another rescue? More good views. Down the ridge to Diane, but scrub comes in and we bail out at Schlink Hilton. Lunch, then a sudden storm, with clouds scudding across. Good place for dinner. Parties surge through, but we have the hut to ourselves that evening. Alone in the wilderness.

Cool start, whip down the road, with the uphill sections where we least want them. Altitude and temperature are inverse: hot at the car. No water at the car for a wash. Ah well, only dirty people wash. Melbourne and a shower, closely followed by a cup of tea. Log ends.

Party: Carol Tidey, Debb Henry, David Walsh and Stephen Lake.

Snowy River Lilo Trip

26th Dec to 3rd Jan

A small group of only four people travelled to southern NSW on 26th Dec for a 'Jopie-exploratory' lilo trip on the upper Snowy River. The next day saw us walking down the Delegate River which we were to follow to its junction with the Snowy. This first day was frustrating in the extreme, particularly for yours truly who hadn't been on a lilo for 12 years. Not only did we have to contend with frequent rapids and boulders of all sizes, such that portages were frequent and strenuous, but also the wind was very strong so that when we were lilo bound we had to work hard to gain any momentum or control. (We later discovered that we were influenced by the weather system that caused so much damage to the Sydney/Hobart yacht race)

At lunch time on the second day we reached the Snowy and thus begun four days of idyllic experiences on a most beautiful river. Liloing is an activity of contrasts. When the river is lazy you can relax and paddle slowly or fast as the mood takes you, enjoying the scenery or contemplating the problems of the world, exploring the backwaters or keeping to the mainstream. On approaching the rapids you have to decide (or let Jopie decide) whether to run them or portage. Each involves frantic activity, either controlling the lilo and trying to stay on or shouldering a heavy sodden pack and carrying a wet lilo and paddle across the rocks to the next patch of calmer water, where the cycle begins again. After an interval of 12 years I found it exhilarating on the second day when I successfully negotiated a rather daunting patch of rough water. It was great to be on a lilo again!

The weather treated us kindly after the first day and we wore thermals to avoid sunburn rather than to keep warm. Mostly the rocks were of granite, often with boulders which had been beautifully sculpted by water action in to the most amazing shapes. Bird life was prolific. Several times we were treated to the awesome sight and sound of swans taking off from the water surface. Eagles were seen circling overhead and we enjoyed the evocative sound of the lapwing (formerly the spur-winged plover). Native pines contrasted with eucalypts on the slopes rising from the river. One night when the weather was particularly stable we slept out under the stars and the moon, which for me was unforgettable. Sandy beaches and swimming holes kept appearing and most campsites were delectable. All this came to an end early one morning when we left the river and trudged slowly up the hill to Wendy's car.

During the return journey to Melbourne three of us walked in to the famous First Creek Falls, which drops precipitously off the edge of the Errinundra Plateau. If

Errinundra is the jewel in the crown of fat East Gippsland, First Creek Falls would have to be the jewel within the jewel. And it doesn't reveal its secrets willingly. Although only a short distance from the road, the scrub ensures the top of the falls is reached with much effort, and to get to the bottom of the three-stage drop is more demanding again. However it was well worth the effort, even for someone who is not a waterfall freak. The rainforest vegetation is just incredible. It had rained the morning before our visit, so the colours were particularly vibrant and everything was dripping with green-ness. A fine ending to a great trip, and I wonder why so few people signed on for it.

Jerry Grandage

Baw Baw Plateau 8-10th January 1999

After walking 1.5 km or so from the Mt Erica Car Park we camped at popular Mushroom Rocks.

Saturday Morning, After waiting for Trish who enjoyed a sleep in we departed and after morning tea at the Hut ruins, just past Mt Erica we side tracked to Mt St Gwinear and although hot in Melbourne it drizzled all day there and views were limited. We rearranged our route due to wet weather and camped at a saddle near Mt St Phillack.

Sunday we retraced our tracks and after viewing Mt St Gwinear on a lovely fine day, went off track to Mt Rernot and as our leaders piece de resistance off track again through an area like botanical gardens past a disused hut to a large secluded snow plain. Back to Mushroom Rocks and the carpark.

Many thanks to our very experienced leader Mark Walters and members Trish Elmore and Anne Wilkins whom I am sure will agree enjoyed a very interesting weekend

Bob Oxlade

Moroka Gorge 22- 26 January 1999

Hydro-aqualalis-amore – this condition has only recently been identified by medical science. One of our members has it and he is unfortunately at an advanced stage. The symptoms are that the patient has a passionate desire to observe rushing water in large quantities, particularly waterfalls. There appears to be no known cure. The only treatment is relief - to humour the patient by assisting them to observe large bodies of water. The condition may be contagious, but how it spreads is not known. This information is vital for the reader to understand the rest of this report.

The party of ten gathered at Horseyard Flat on Saturday morning to begin the walk in to Moroka Gorge. Not for this group the usual sedate walk in. No, we were going to explore the non-visited parts of the gorge. We climbed a hill then descended 600+ metres into the gorge, arriving at a spot unknown to mankind – we had walked down the wrong spur. Not to worry, the planned arrival point was only a kilometre or so down river. The campsite was established in bush on the bank and we enjoyed a leisurely evening. Some light rain fell just as we were finishing our meal but we were able to gather around the fire to yarn a little before retiring.

On Sunday we up at the crack of dawn to explore the gorge down-river. This required some nine river crossings out, and nine back. Some of these required knicker-depth wading, with some fast currents. The walking was varied with scrub, rock-hopping, leaping and general gymnastics. One of Merilyn's shoes gave up so she and Bill retired. The remainder continued and discovered waterfalls and many rapids. After lunch some of the group continued further downstream as the leader was not satisfied with the rate of finding waterfalls. They found some more while others rested. We thought that the return trip was rather better – we had better views of the rapids.

On arrival at camp most of us went into the river for a swim/bathe although there were some wimps! We had two dining areas – one quite secluded dining room with fireplace, while the other offered dining on the terrace with views of the bathroom. The latter was superior, with bathroom antics well worth watching.

We explored upstream on Monday and this was quite different. By now the leader's condition was contagious and the group was undeterred when David slipped and went full-length in. Arriving at an impossible vertical-sided cliff gorge – like something out of a Harrison Ford movie - the leader found a way up – and down – the cliff face and finally into the water, over some rocks and a final leap onto the bank. At this point the condition had not affected two of the group (they must have been eating garlic) and they retired. The rest continued and came to a magnificent waterfall. The leader's eyes gleamed even brighter and we pushed on. More river crossings, some swims, and then, a balancing act across a fallen tree to gain a view of a long-drop, narrow waterfall, majestic and breathtaking. Lunch was declared. Arriving at the Harrison Ford gorge on the return journey we climbed to a ledge, hung on by fingernails and toes and edged along the cliff. The condition had so affected the group by now that no-one faltered.

Back at camp we bathed and dined. Fish were jumping out of the river in the evening sun as we ate anything edible. Bill was training to be a shoemaker, making a

wonderful job of stitching Marilyn's shoe together. (It held together to get Marilyn out.). We made a 7.15 a.m. start the next day to climb out before the day became too hot. This was a good tactic and we were back at the cars by lunchtime. This time we took the spur that started at the campsite.

Footnote: All of the group are now afflicted by the condition, some seriously. They can be identified by mutterings of 'you could lilo down that' and 'let's swim to the bottom of the waterfall and get behind it' when confronted with extremely large and dangerous waterfalls.

Jopie Bodegraven was the leader and is in a dangerous condition. The others, only slightly less seriously affected, are: Jenny Flood, Max Casley, David Walsh, Kathleen Kerr, Bill Metzenthén, Marilyn Whippey, Rod Mattingley, Gina Hopkins and Derrick Brown.

Thomson River lilo trip 29 - 31 January 1999

The medical condition referred to in the Moroka Gorge trip did not affect me at all, although I could see it in the others. However, on the following weekend Geoff Kelly was leading a lilo trip down the Thomson River and although I had made a decision not to go on this I found myself unaccountably packing my gear and driving down the South Eastern freeway on Friday evening. The thought of sitting on a lilo being propelled along the rushing river spurred me on...

And so the party collected at Erica on Saturday morning. We were soon in the water at the Thomson dam wearing life-vests and helmets - Leader Geoff Kelly, Mariannne Walt, Bill Metzenthén, Marilyn Whippey, Mark Tishler, Jenny Flood, Jopie Bodegraven, Gina Hopkins, Derrick Brown. Strange how many of the Moroka Gorge names had turned up again. Mark had paddled all of five metres before he broke a paddle blade. He chose an excellent time to do this as we had a spare paddle in a car. Back in the water with new paddle we set off again. Mark immediately broke the paddle again - this time the shaft split. The leader was contemplating a ban on this obviously dangerous fellow, but he relented when Mark quickly mended the shaft with sticky tape - a must in every liloists repair kit. The shaft was progressively repaired during our voyage and ended up with internal and external splints.

The day was quite exciting as there were rapids for most of the way - not huge or dangerous ones, but sufficient to keep the interest. There was only one portage (on Sunday), and we only had to walk and lift the lilos a few times to get over shallows.

It wasn't long after starting that we suffered the first puncture. Bill's lilo suddenly deflated - a great rent had

appeared. We carried four spares between us so we merely packed away the damaged craft and pumped up a replacement. We did this six times over the weekend, repairing punctures at lunchstops and at the campsite. Bill suffered three of the punctures and felt a bit miffed at this bad luck. We felt that it was something to do with his weight. Jopie meantime was busy grappling with the problem of how to reinforce a lilo to prevent puncturing. He had already stuck protective patches on critical areas but this did not prevent his cushion from suffering a tear. More designs proliferated as the trip progressed. A lilo capable of traversing ragged rapids and horrendous waterfalls seemed to be the objective.

The camp site was a welcome sight and we soon had dry clothes, a fire going, and the billy on. We slept well. Only minutes after starting out on Sunday morning Bill had another puncture as we went over rapids. Again we were soon underway. Lunch was taken at the Walhalla bridge where the passengers watched us in some amazement from the midday train. Then it was down to the old mining tunnel and a portage around to the tunnel exit where we had fun crossing the whitewater. More rapids followed then all too soon we were at Coopers Creek and the end.

Committee Reports

Walks Secretary:	Attendances for December 98		
	Trips	Av	1997
Sunday Bus	3	32.7	35.7
Pack Carry	5	6.8	8.3
Base Camp	1	4	9
Other	2	9	10
Lilo	1	4	6
Cancelled	1		
Membership:			
Life Members			11
Honorary Members			10
Single Memberships			371
Family Memberships	(2x 48 =)		96
Total membership			488
Duty Roster			
Feb 10th	Judy & Marisa		
Feb 17th	Sylvia & Alan*		
Feb 24th	Jan & Jean		
3rd March	Fiona & Derrick*		
Next committee meeting	1st March ,99		

Walks Secretary's Report 1998

Year	Total	Attendance totals in previous years			Members	Visitors	No. trips
		Day	Weekend total	P/C			
1998	2,916	2,411	505	201	2,368	548	138
1997	3,019	2,488	531	234	2,403	616	135
1996	2,937	2,443	594	335	2,337	600	148
1995	2,993	2,402	591	323	2,256	737	146
1994	2,719	2,189	530	304	2,058	661	139

Jan-Dec 1998 Statistics (1997 in ())

Walk type	Number of trips		Average	
Sunday bus	50	(50)	39.1	(40.1)
Pack carry	28	(31)	7.2	(7.5)
Base camp	16	(14)	11.6	(13.4)
Lodge	5	(5)	10.2	(22)
Wednesday	12	(12)	13.4	(11.8)
Dandenongs	10	(10)	15.7	(14.8)
Historical	2	(5)	13.5	(17.6)
Saturday (M)	7	(-)	7.7	(-)
Other	8	(7)	15.4	(13.1)
Cancelled	17	(16)		

1998 was another good year for the club with the level of activity following the pattern set in previous years. The number of Pack Carrys was lower than last year due to cancellations, but the average party size was similar to last year. Base Camps continue to be popular, as are the Wednesday and Dandenong Explorer walks. Canoe trips are also drawing big crowds.

The new series of medium rated Saturday walks introduced this year has attracted a small but appreciative clientele. The popular Historical walks have suffered from Athol's "retirement" from the field; steps are being taken to fill his shoes. Margaret Borden has also announced her retirement

as coordinator of Wednesday Walks and Max Casley will be taking over this role.

Thanks to all those who attended meetings of the walks sub-committee, which is responsible for drawing up the programme. Special thanks to Jean Woodger (Assistant Walks Secretary, responsible for Sunday walks), Margaret Borden (Wednesday walks), Michael Humphrey (Dandenongs Explorers) and Athol Schafer (Historicals).

Pearson Cresswell
Walks Secretary 1998

The Fitzroy

The river *still* runs free.


Thanks to the pressure from many concerned individuals and organisations like the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Wilderness Society and Environs Kimberley, the WA government has agreed not to permit a dam on the Fitzroy River at Dimond Gorge. At least for now, this region has been saved.

Why not see this wild and spectacular country for yourself? If you can carry a pack, we can take you beyond the 4WD tracks and show you some of the incredible places that could have been lost.

We offer three departures for 1999: 25 April – 9 May, 9–30 May and 8–22 August. On the May trip, you need not carry any more than eight kg. On the others you carry a full pack, however, it will be quite light as you camp away from the vehicle for no more than two nights at a time and perfect weather means you can do without many things you would need in other climates.

Ask for our brochure and trip notes.

Willis's Walkabouts
12 Carrington St Millner NT 0810
Email: walkabout@ais.net.au



Phone: (08) 8985 2134 Fax: (08) 8985 2355

Walks in February/March 1999

Date	Location		Stand	Leader
5-7 Feb	MT BULLER/STIRLING LODGE	Private	E	George Zamora
6 Sat	DANDENONGS	Private	M	Jerry Grandage
7 Sun	DYERS CREEK -BUNYIP RIVER	Bus	E/M & M	William Cone & Peter McGrath
12-14	MT NELSE- BIG RIVER-SPION KOPJE	Private	M	Gina Hopkins
14 Sun	CAPE WOOLAMAI (PHILLIP IS)	Bus	E & E/M	Brian Crouch & Ros Breen
17 Wed	DONNA BUANG-CEMENT CREEK	Private	E/M	Max Casley
19-21	MT BUFALO BASE CAMP	Private	Var	Rod Novak
21 Sun	BEN CAIRN -MT TOOLBEWONG	Bus	E & E/M	John Kittson & Fay Pratt
26-28	WILSONS PROM :SEALERS COVE	Private	M	Pearson Cresswell
26-28	WILSONS PROM IN A DAY	Private	H	Bill Metzenthen
27 Sat	DANDENONGS EXPLORER	Private	E	Michael Humphrey
28 Sun	LOST CHILDRENS TRACK	Bus	E & E/M	Peter Havlicek & Jan Palich
Labour Day Weekend				
5-8 Mar	CANOE TRIP	Private	E	George Zamora
5-8	FEATHERTOP-RAZORBACK	Private	E/M	Jean Giese
5-8	BRYCES GORGE	Private	M/H	Jerry Grandage
5-8	HOWQUA BASE CAMP -	Private	E/M	Alan Ide
7 Sun	CUMBERLAND RIVER	Bus	E/M & M	Alan Miller & Fay Pratt
8 Mon	HISTORICAL WALK	Private	E	Lance Mobbs

The NEWS of the Melbourne Bushwalkers

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