



THE NEWS

OF THE
MELBOURNE BUSHWALKERS INCORPORATED

EDITION No. 440

OCTOBER 1987

PRICE 20C

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S O C I A L C O L U M N

WINE & CHEESE PARTY

SATURDAY 24TH OCTOBER, 7.30 PM

Jenny Ross and Jopie Bodegraven have very kindly allowed us the use of their home for this function.

It will be an evening in which to sample some interesting wines and a wide range of tasty cheeses. Non-alcoholic beverages will also be available.

Charge \$8.00.

The evening is limited to 40 people. Location 1 Wickham Road, Croydon.

Contact Jopie (723 3632) or David Pickup in the clubrooms.

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SLIDE SHOW

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 28TH, 7.30 TO 8.00 PM

This will be a fairly informal affair lasting about half an hour, and will hopefully be the first of a regular series.

Anyone who has slides of recent trips is invited to show them and tell us about them so that we can admire or giggle at them. This will also give visitors and day walkers an idea of what happens on weekend trips and what they are missing out on and vice versa for day trips. It's nice to see what some people get up to.

So come along and if possible bring along a few slides.

JOPIE BODEGRAVEN

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A DAY AT BALNARRING PICNIC RACES

SATURDAY 7TH NOVEMBER

Come and enjoy a picnic at the Balnarring Picnic Races. The picnic area is in a large shady grove of gum trees adjacent to the race track, and cars may be taken in.

The first race is at 1.00 pm.

Logistics

Meeting Point: The car park of the Hastings Hotel, Hastings.
From there we shall proceed in convoy to the race track.

Time: 11.00 am.

Food & drink: BYO - Barbecues are allowed.

Admission cost: Approximately \$3.50.

For queries and location maps contact David Pickup in the clubrooms.

Correspondence should be directed to:

The Secretary
Melbourne Bushwalkers
Box 1751Q, G.P.O.
MELBOURNE. 3001.

Meetings are held in the clubrooms, 377 Little Bourke Street,
entrance from Racing Club Lane, every Wednesday night 7-9 pm.
Visitors are always welcome.

SOCIAL COLUMN (Continued)

COLONIAL BALL

YHA PORTABLE HOSTELS with ALBERT PARK BADMINTON

presents

COLONIAL BALL

featuring PARADIDDLE

and also SQUARE DANCING
called by HOWARD COCKBURN

at

South Melbourne Town Hall
(2 Bank Street)

on

Friday 20th November 1987
8 pm to 1.30 am

Tea and Coffee served

BYO supper basket, drink, glass

Cost: \$7.00 (single)

N.B. WE recommend the band for this function, so plenty of dancing
can be expected.

DAY WALKS

N O V E M B E R 1 9 8 7

SUN. 1 NOVEMBER LORNE - ERSKINE PALLS - CORA LYNN MEDIUM
CREEK AND EASY/MEDIUM

LEADERS BOB BELL & MARTIN WILLIAMS
TRANSPORT BUS FROM BATMAN AVENUE, 8.45 am
EXPECTED TIME OF RETURN 8.30 pm
MAP REFERENCE LORNE 1:25 000 VICMAP
APPROX. DISTANCE 13 & 20 km

These two walks cover most of the best aspects of day walking. The Lorne area is renowned for its beauty and hopefully we have managed to show you a glimpse of this.

The easier of the two walks takes in the Erskine Palls, the Cora Lynn Cascades, Phantom Falls, Henderson Falls and Won Wondat Falls. This walk also takes you into the fascinating "Canyon". We listed this as an easy-medium walk due to some rock hopping and the possibility of wet feet. There are moderate ups and lots of downs.

The medium walk adds the Splitter and Straw Falls as well as some bush bashing (approximately 1 km), more ups and downs and more kilometres than the easy walk.

We hope to see you all there for a truly beautiful and interesting walk.

DAY WALKS (Continued)SUN. 8 NOVEMBER MT. STINTON - PARADISE PLAINS EASY & MEDIUM

LEADERS GRAHAM HARDING & IAN NEWBOLD
 TRANSPORT BUS FROM BATMAN AVENUE, 9.00 am
 EXPECTED TIME OF RETURN 8.00 pm
 MAP REFERENCE HEALESVILLE 1:100 000
 APPROX. DISTANCE 14 & 18 km

Come along and join us for some good walking through superb mountain ash forest and beech groves close to Marysville.

The walks will follow forest tracks with some excellent views along the way and finish at Steavensons Falls Reserve, allowing time for a leisurely appreciation of this spectacular waterfall.

SUN. 15 NOVEMBER ENFIELD STATE FOREST EASY & MEDIUM

LEADERS MAX CASLEY & GINA HOPKINS
 TRANSPORT BUS FROM BATMAN AVENUE, 9.00 am
 EXPECTED TIME OF RETURN 8.15 pm
 MAP REFERENCE BERRINGA, SMYTHESDALE, DEREEL, NAPOLEONS 1:25 000;
 BALLARAT 1:100 000
 APPROX. DISTANCE 14 & 17 km

Just south of Ballarat, this is a pretty walk through a lightly timbered forest area with much evidence of gold mine workings. The walk will be mainly on tracks, with not too many ups and downs, and no fences to negotiate. There will be many wildflowers to see, especially orchids. A long bus journey is involved, so the bus will leave promptly at 9 am.

SAT. 21 NOVEMBER HISTORICAL WALK - THE STRAND EASY

LEADER ATHOL SCHAFFER
 TRANSPORT MEET UNDER THE CLOCKS IN TIME TO CATCH 1.42 PM
 TRAIN TO WILLIAMSTOWN
 MAP REFERENCE MELWAYS 56

Much of Hobsons Bay is slowly but surely disappearing under a number of landfill schemes, as a walk around the bay will show. We will walk north from the interest-packed historic Williamstown waterfront and along The Strand for some enjoyable views across the bay to finish at Newport about 5 pm.

SUN. 22 NOVEMBER KINGLAKE NATIONAL PARK MEDIUM/HARD & EASY

LEADERS GEOFF MATTINGLEY & TRISH ELMORE
 TRANSPORT BUS FROM BATMAN AVENUE, 9.00 am
 EXPECTED TIME OF RETURN 7.00 pm
 MAP REFERENCE STRATHEWEN 1:25 000

This is a good medium-hard day walk, mostly through the bush, with very little of the day on roads or tracks. There are some steep climbs and descents which make this more challenging than the average day walk. If we are lucky, there will be some wildflowers about (this is good orchid country). As well, the short distance from Melbourne means more walking and less sitting in the bus!

The medium-hard walk is not recommended for inexperienced walkers, but the accompanying easy walk offers a sample of the same country without the steep parts,

DAY WALKS (Continued)

SAT. 28 NOVEMBER DANDENONGS EXPLORER - EMERALD TO BELGRAVE EASY

LEADER MICHAEL HUMPHREY
TRANSPORT CARS

For details of this walk please see the leader in the clubrooms.

SUN. 29 NOVEMBER MT. BECKWORTH - MT. BOLTON EASY & MEDIUM

LEADERS ROSEMARY COTTER & WENDY BARNES
TRANSPORT BUS FROM BATMAN AVENUE, 9.00 am
EXPECTED TIME OF RETURN 6.00 pm
MAP REFERENCE VICMAP 1:25 000 EVANSFORD
APPROX. DISTANCE 12 and 16 km

The Mount Beckworth range west of Clunes is noted for its picturesque bare rock faces, birds and orchids.

We will start walking at the edge of the State Forest and climb through lightly timbered granite country to the top of Mount Beckworth for lunch and excellent views of the surrounding area.

After lunch, it is downhill to cross farmland to Mount Bolton, another prominent viewing point.

Bring water for lunch.

W E E K E N D W A L K S
N O V E M B E R 1 9 8 7

30 OCTOBER - GUYS HUT -- WONNANGATTA - THE VIKING MEDIUM/HARD
3 NOVEMBER MT HOWITT

LEADER ALEX VOLTAN
TRANSPORT CARS
EXPECTED TIME OF RETURN LATE TUESDAY NIGHT
MAP REFERENCE HOWITT 1:100 000

Starting at Guys Hut, we shall proceed down Dry Creek, camping in the upper reaches of the Wonnangatta Valley after a 20-25 km day. This will give us the option of exploring the river into Terrible Follow or heading up the spur to the Viking the next day.

If the Viking option -is taken we shall keep to the Alpine Track to Howitt via Mt. Speculation and, along the Crosscut Saw, camping in the vicinity of the Vallejo Ganther Hut.

The next half day would be spent going to Mt. Marjorie to look at Hell's window - then back to the cars at the end of the track.

Exploring the Terrible Hollow would depend on the adventurousness of the group. I leave that option open.

6-8 NOVEMBER COLLINS SIDING - WEST TYERS RIVER - EASY/MEDIUM
EAST TYERS RIVER - TYERS JUNCTION

LEADER JOHN SISEMAN
TRANSPORT CARS
MAP REFERENCE VMTC BAW BAW NATIONAL PARK, VICMAP 1:25 000 TYERS JUNCTION
APPROX. DISTANCE 30 km

Two days walking along old timber tramways through the mountain ash and fern forests of Mt. Erica. Just to warm you up, Saturday morning will be spent walking without packs, which can be left in the cars until lunch time. The walk will commence at 9.00 am at Collins Siding, approximately 2 km south of Erica township. Most of the walk will be along well graded tracks through dense, wet forests. Bring your favourite leech repellent!

WEEKEND WALKS (Continued)

13-15 NOVEMBER	PORT CAMPBELL FULLY CATERED FOR BASE CAMP	EASY & MEDIUM
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LEADERS JOPIE BODEGRAVEN & JENNY ROSS

We really are limiting this trip to 18 and we're very close to that number already. Our apologies to anyone who wants to come but misses out.

20-22 NOVEMBER	MT. LOCH - MACHINERY SPUR - DIAMANTINA SPUR - MT. HOTHAM	MEDIUM
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LEADER	CERI LAW
TRANSPORT	CARS
EXPECTED TIME OF RETURN	SUNDAY EVENING
MAP REFERENCE	BOGONG 1:100 000 NATMAP; BOGONG HIGH PLAINS ALGONA GUIDES

APPROX. DISTANCE 25-30 km

The cars will be left at Diamantina Hut. We will walk over Mt. Hotham then along to Mt. Loch, down Machinery Spur to the West Branch of the Kiewa River. We then walk up Diamantina Spur and camp below High Knob among snow gums, with great views of Feathertop to our north. This day will be relatively long and it may be necessary to carry water up the Diamantina Spur.

On Sunday we will visit the summit of Feathertop which has superb views, and then walk back to the cars along the Razorback.

<u>27-29 NOVEMBER</u>	<u>PRESIDENT'S WEEKEND: WILKINSON LODGE</u>	<u>EASY</u>
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LEADER	SYLVIA WILSON
TRANSPORT	CARS. LEAVE FRIDAY AFTERNOON/EVENING.
EXPECTED TIME OF RETURN	SUNDAY NIGHT
MAP REFERENCE	BOGONG 1:100 000; NELSE, MT. COPE, SHANNONVALE 1:25 000; ALGONA MAPS OF BOGONG HIGH PLAINS; JOHN SISEMAN'S BOOK ON SAME (PUBLISHED BY ALGONA)
APPROX. DISTANCE	10 to 20 km

WHAT! You've never been to Wilkie?

This is it! An introductory offer on Wilkie! This, the Melbourne Bushies pied à terre/niche/escape hole is on the Bogong High Plains, beyond Falls Creek. Come and stay in it or around it (camp), and enjoy what Bushies have raved over for years. If you haven't got any equipment never mind, all can be begged, borrowed or stolen - or even hired. All you really need is your full day walking gear plus more food and a few more clothes (the w-eather can change fast).

Leave Melbourne Friday afternoon/evening, arrive back Sunday night; we'll be sharing transport as much as possible. Smashing walks of different grades all over the Place.

For Saturday tea we'll have a communal barbecue, BYO meat or whatever; and the makings of a salad, or sweet, to share. If anyone has a very portable BBQ I'd be glad to hear from them. Be warned though, Wilkie is a mile from the cars, everything must be carried in.

All right you lot who've been before, you can come too! However, numbers will have to be limited to something reasonable, so book early. See you there!

W A L K P R O G R A M
D E C E M B E R 1 9 8 7

The full Summer Walks Program is due out with November "News". Here's a preview of the December and Christmas walks.

Date	Location	Trans- port	Std.	Leader	Phone (Home)
<u>December</u>					
4-6	Sheepyard Flat - Eagles Peaks - Lickhole Creek	Cars	M	Russell Jones	386 0150
Sun. 6	Cathedral Range	Bus	E&M	Jopie Bodegraven & Gina Hopkins	723 3632
11-13	Echo Flat - Boundary Track - The Beeches	Cars	E/M	Spencer George	836 4225
Sun. 13	Kennels Falls - The Beeches - Whitehouse Creek	Bus	E&M	Fred f=alls & Ian Newbold	557 3724
18-20	Buckland Spur - Mt. Everett - Evans Creek Gorge	Cars	M	Merilyn Whimpey	578 1062
Sun. 20	Somers Park - Mt. Vinegar - Fernshaws	Bus	E&M	Max Casley & Hugh Duncan	527 3111
<u>Christmas Trips</u>					
Dec. 24-27	Exploring the Upper Cumberland	Cars	E/M	Phil Larkin	813 2271
26-31	Murray River Canoe Trip	Cars	-	Doug Pocock	059 64 4974
27-2	Lilo Trip - Shoalhaven River	Cars	M	Spencer George	836 4225

O B I T U A R Y

We are extremely sorry to report the passing of Jim Hedstrom, a dear and valued friend of the club. He died suddenly on October 1st while at his doctor's for a routine check up, of yet another heart attack.

Jim had been a member for some twelve years, was a prime mover for getting the club bus and ever since has been of inestimable value for keeping it going. His contribution will be sorely missed. But much more than this is the dear person that he was, always cheerful and often giving friendly hugs, interested in people, a truly warm and loving person. If I may quote Harold's obituary in "The Age", "You left your mark on many people. We remember you with love in our hearts". That is exactly so.

We extend our deepest sympathies to his wife, children and grandchildren.

C O M M I T T E E N O T E S
MEETING HELD ON 5th OCTOBER

Correspondence:

Letter from Vic. Maps (Division of Survey & Mapping) who asked what were specific details bushwalkers want re maps, e.g. Kinglake area is on six maps, would we like it on one? Also, what is our priority of details, especially on 1:25 000. Anybody who wants to make any contributions please see Keith White who is putting some ideas together.

Letter from Department of Sport and Recreation for future participants in the Ski Tour Leaders and Bushwalking and Mountaincraft Leadership certificate courses. All forms and information pinned on the notice board.

And an invitation to run in Stockton NSW Novelty Nude Pun Pun. (Yes, I think this is serious; but, no, they haven't given us a date.) However, it's for Port Stevens & Newcastle Skinny Dippers Clubs. Sounds a bit exhibitionist to me . . .

Treasurer:

Bank Balance 30/9/87:	\$5097.92	(cf. \$6169.17 at 31/8/87)
Payments to be ratified:		\$
National Trust, Portland - President's Weekend		50.00
Rampower - fuel and oil, August 1967		<u>197.02</u>
		247.02
Bills to be paid:		
Driving and garaging of bus, August 1987		430.00
Rob Ayre: aluminium and filler for Wilky fire surround		69.82
Mountain Designs: clubroom rental		<u>1275.00</u>
		<u>1344.82</u>
	Total:	<u>\$1591.84</u>

Walks Secretary

August 199 walkers
 173 day walkers
 26 weekend walkers
 146 members
 53 visitors
\$1459.00 income

The Summer Program is complete and is ready for printing. The Autumn Program is in shape. Keith would love to hear from potential leaders as soon as possible.

MORE CHALLENGING DAY WALKS ONCE A MONTH

As part of our attempt to introduce a more varied walks program we are thinking of introducing a once-a-month harder walk on a Saturday.

Possible guidelines are:

walks often not previewed, in fact they could be quite exploratory and could be used to suss out areas for Sunday walks;
may involve longer distances, rougher terrain and more scrub than Sunday walks;
transport to be by private car; walkers would generally meet at a suburban location to rationalise transport and passengers would pay drivers 4 cents per kilometre;
the leader can refuse anyone if he/she thinks the walk is too hard for them:

(continued)

COMMITTEE NOTES (Continued)

leader to choose starting time to suit the walk;
 leader to choose walk location for inclusion on program
 (as opposed to walks committee);
 if the demand is there other walks could be organised
 at short notice and advertised in "News".

We hope that this type of regular walk will generate its own sub-group and attract new members who prefer this type of walk occasionally.

If you are interested in this type of walk, either as a leader or as a follower, please put your name on the list on the noticeboard in the clubrooms.

MID-WEEK WALKS

Is there a demand for mid-week walks? Many members are retired, unemployed or can get RD0s. Mid-week walks may broaden the club's appeal to non-members and give members more options.

To get going we would need a co-ordinator and indications of support.

A meeting of interested persons will be held in the clubrooms on Wednesday 11th November at 8.00 pm to plan strategy, elect a co-ordinator and plan a program. In the meantime, put your name on the list on the noticeboard if you are interested and then think up some good ideas for the meeting on the 11th.

WALK STANDARDS Guide for visitors and leadersWhat constitutes an EASY walk?

Our present definition:

"Easy walking, ample rests, long lunch, not too many ups and downs."

This is quite subjective and not very useful to visitors or members. Compare it, for example, with that of Sydney Bushwalkers:

"S.B.W, walks are graded easy, medium and hard. This applies to fit, experienced walkers only, and, consequently, prospective members may find their first Easy walk quite Hard."

"Easy: walking mostly on tracks with little thick scrub and generally flat terrain. Distances up to 15 km."

etc.

Suggestion

That we adopt new, informative text in our handouts, and also prepare a guide for leaders in planning a walk, with examples. These to be printed in "News" requesting comment. A first draft text, for example:

"Club -walks are graded according to their degree of difficulty. The description applies to fit, reasonably experienced walkers. Consequently new walkers may find their first "easy" day walk fairly difficult. These notes are only a guide; you should discuss the walk with the leader when booking.

For Sunday walks

Bludge: a non-qualifying walk, probably involving a short walk in easy terrain, long lunch and numerous swimming, botanic study, or rest stops.

COMMITTEE NOTES (Continued)

"Easy: walking mostly on tracks or in open country with possibly some stretches of thin scrub, few hills, and adequate rest stops. Distances may be up to 13 km in flat, open terrain, but will be shorter if scrub or significant hills are involved.

Easy-Medium: more consistent walking, again mostly on tracks but with some significant hills, probably some stretches of thin scrub, possibly some rock hopping. Distances up to 17 km, but may be much shorter, depending on the difficulty of the terrain. Reasonable rest stops.

Medium: consistent walking on tracks or in open bushland, usually with patches of thicker scrub, several moderate climbs, or rock hopping. Distances up to about 20 km with reasonable rest stops. A good level of fitness is required.

Medium-Hard: consistent off-track walking, with major climbs and probably thick bush. Few rests; a very good level of fitness is required.

Hard: strenuous walking in difficult terrain, long distances and few rests. A high fitness level and bushwalking experience are required.

Tough: consistent strenuous walking or running, long distances and few brief rests. Extreme fitness and established masochistic traits essential.

For Saturday walks

Similar grading as to terrain, but probably half to two-thirds the distance.

For weekend walks

These are more difficult because of the weight of a full pack. In general, the terrain would be similar to that for the graded equivalent day walk, but the distance per day a little less."

Your comments are required, preferably in writing and preferably to Rob Ayre who did most of the work for this.

Duty Poster

October	14th Hugh, Neil
	21st Rob, Ed
	28th Jenny, Rob
November	4th Bob, Wendy
	11th Ceri, Ed

Next Committee meeting

Monday, 9th November.

And Further

You might remember that Carolyn McLean offered her services to help us think about the losing of 80-90% of our visitors. Several Committee members have been pursuing this and our initial list of 10 pages of good ideas and otherwise are taking shape into a priority list. Some immediate changes you might note are that coffee, tea and biscuits (for a nominal fee) are on every Wednesday night (the President for one is eternally grateful); and name tags for the committee. However, we need input from members on lots of issues.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS?

COMMITTEE NOTES (Continued)

Next, we felt that more in-clubroom events were needed. The eventual aim would be for something every second week. Items could be quite short, say 20 minutes even. And coffee, of course, afterwards.

Some ideas so far:

- slides
- silly competitions, quizzes
- photography competitions
- talks
- bushwalking topics
- navigation things
- equipment, e.g. first aid for a day walk
- memorable trips
- welcome new members

Have you got any more ideas?

Would you be interested in organising just one of these?

But most of all, we need a CLUBROOMS ACTIVITIES CO-ORDINATOR. Watch out, the arm twisters are lurking!

P.S. Fantastic! Got an offer already! See Jopie's article on a slide show - page 1.

At this stage, may I thank Carolyn enormously for helping us get this underway. We couldn't have made nearly as effective a start without her framework, and her suggestions and contributions were of great value.

Also a big thank you to Rob Ayre's Mum who put all our disjointed brainwaves onto her word processor and will probably see the refinements several more times.

W I L K Y

At the end of the official snow season a group of us skied into Wilky for the weekend. We arrived, tired, just on dark. To our consternation we found that the inner door would not open. Somehow, the lock had been snibbed with the tongue out - making it impossible to open the door with the key. It took us quite some time to get into Wilky, during which we passed various observations about the group which had been in the hut before us.

I have suggested to the Wilky manager that the lock be replaced with a type which is not prone to this problem. In the meantime, we all need to take care with the existing lock.

Signed - DESPERATE SKIER

N E W M E M B E R S

We welcome the following new members:

Edward Magen	1/200 Bay Rd., Sandringham, 3191. (W) 598 2865
Steve Sullivan	8/548 High St., Armadale, 3143. (H) 529 5054, (W) 480 1866
Darren Miller	343 Blackshaws Rd., Altona North, 3025 (H) 391 5089

C H A N G E S O F I N F O R M A T I O N

Eileen Ayre - Change of work phone no. 347 7300
 Monique Mascas 930½ William Street
 London,
 Ontario N59256, Canada

SKIING THE RAZORBACK

The Razorback, from Mt. Hotham to Mt. Feathertop, is one of my favourite ski trips, with terrific views, and plenty of skiing variety.

On a sunny Saturday early in September, seven of us set out from Diamantina Nut on firm, but not icy, snow. Up on to the Big Dipper, where the prudent (read wimps) walked down and the hoons skied it. Then some gentler ups and downs and into the trees to climb to our campsite at the top of Champion Spur.

After lunch we headed towards Feathertop, with a short, steep schuss just past our camp. We were out of the trees now. Next landmark was Twin Knobs, where we had to side-step up a steep section. Then over High Knob, the top of the Diamantina Spur. As we neared Feathertop, low clouds began rolling in and we wondered if it would be worth the final climb. But the clouds dissipated before we reached the top, and we had fine views all around of snow-capped mountains and green valleys. We met a group of Melbourne Uni students who had walked up from MUMC Hut and were looking forward to a black tie dinner in the hut that night.

The snow had softened while we were on the summit, and Bill and I were able to ski down (very gingerly on my part), while the others walked back to where they had sensibly left their skis at the foot of the steep pitch.

Next we had a side trip to Federation Hut for afternoon tea, then headed back to camp, with the snow firming in the late afternoon. Small bumps on the slopes made extra excitement as we became airborne. Bill flew a couple of metres at Twin Knobs, but crashed after landing, to the amusement of the others.

That night after dinner we admired Mt. Feathertop in the full moonlight. Towards morning I woke up to hear snow falling softly on the tent.

Next morning as we were packing up I discovered a native rat which had been warming itself in my gaiters. It's so nice to have a companion animal! Poor ratto wasn't at all pleased when we took down our tent, and he tried to shelter on our packs, but didn't appreciate being picked up in gloved hands. I felt guilty about leaving him in the cold, but I guess that was his home and he was adapted to it.

Getting down through thick trees in new snow was difficult, but eventually we were back in the open and threw down our packs to ski an inviting slope. But in cold, windy weather we soon skied back to the cars for an early trip home.

- MERILYN WHIMPEY

IN TROUBLE AGAIN

Our mistake was to split up. Despite explicitly stating on our maps the place and time of our rendezvous, we missed. The result was anxious hours wondering what had become of our companion (and my car) and seeing my partner's stamina wane as we tramped through the driving rain back to our original rendezvous point.

We were to preview a walk with every confidence of doing the lot that day. Although there were initial delays (due principally to my sleep-in) we made our starting point in good time. We parked the car and started tramping along the course of the river which was to form the basis of the proposed walk. We made our way merrily along checking landmarks, diversions and chatting.

The point of departure came after lunch when it was suggested one of us return to the car and bring it to a rendezvous point, thus eliminating the need to back track. In spite of my qualms about the proposal my partners were confident nothing could go wrong;

IN TROUBLE AGAIN (Continued)

even if the worst happened, farmhouses were close by. So one of us returned to the car and my partner and I proceeded with the preview.

The rest of the sector of the preview was rather pleasant walking. We stopped to chat with the owner of a magnificent mud-brick house about the country ahead. Following his suggestions, we passed through wonderful country and reached our objective well before time, even though the ground was sodden underfoot. After giving the place a look-over we went on to make our rendezvous.

There was no car. With the time we made there was no doubt we would meet along the road. We walked down the road.

"She could have bogged the car. After all, she's never driven my car."

Foolish of me to have her drive an unfamiliar car, but my partner and I were to be leaders of the proposed walk. In any case our companion knew this area. It was when we were practically back to our starting point that my partner raised an exasperating scenario. That our companion had in fact followed our instructions and was at the rendezvous point becoming concerned at our absence. In view of this I proposed we split up, one going on to the start point, the other back to the rendezvous. Fortunately, my partner keeps a cool head and suggested (or implored) we stay together. So together we tramped back to the starting point.

No car. Back to the rendezvous and hope she was still there on our arrival. It had already been raining hard in the driving wind for the past hour but the wind was with us. On the return trip the wind was against us, driving the rain into our faces and saturating our trousers. We were cold. My partner's pace had begun to slacken before we reached the starting point; it slackened further with the distance. I was to stop frequently in order not to lose sight of her. In the end I just kept tramping, anxiously forging ahead to the rendezvous.

It was beginning to get late in the afternoon, light was fading as I passed the place where we originally came onto the road. Then around the bend came my car. Through the open driver's window our long lost companion said it all:

"Boy, am I glad to see you!"

Felicitous greetings indeed, our anxiety turned to relief.

As my partner and I were numb with cold, I asked our aptly named driver to do the rest of the driving. It took a long time for us to warm up.

Our companion had indeed done as instructed. In fact she had plenty of time to stop, observe some wallabies on the way back to the car and get bogged twice, requiring help from land owners to free the car. On the second occasion the property-owner even took her to the falls which had been our objective. Then she waited and waited and waited.

On our return to Melbourne we had dinner and for dessert we had icecream.

- ALEX VOLTAN
