

OCTOBER 1979TRIP REPORT - RUDAWANGS

Maps: Endrick 1:25,000 & Corang 2 inch:1 mile
Date: September 29, 30 - October 1
Activity: Bushwalking
Route: Newhaven Gap - The Castle - Folly Pt. - Newhaven Gap
Party 1: Jim Sligar, Mark Thompson, Nuri Chorvat, Kevin Mills.
Party 2: Ian Burns, Michele Stewart, Trish Law, Dave Whitelaw.

Saturday morning and its pouring rain - party 2 hasn't arrived and we're sitting in the cars eating breakfast. There's been almost a constant stream of cars going into Newhaven Gap. We keep saying we should have known better than coming here on a long weekend. By the time we've reached the parking spot the rain has almost gone, there must be at least a dozen cars along the road. All the occupants have begun to walk thank heavens. We begin walking and the sun has come out. This is a very popular walking area and we see people all weekend, especially around the Castle. Our route takes in Mt. Tarr, Monolith Valley, Darvi Pass and finally up Folley Point and back to the cars at Newhaven Gap. Party 2 we find out later is some hours behind us. We eventually arrive back at 3.30 pm on the Monday. Party 2 has suffered from a case of "temporary disorientation" and headed up the wrong creek. They eventually get home at 3.00 pm on the Tuesday. Unintentionally having an extra days walking. From what I can gather both trips were quite eventful and enjoyable.

KEVIN MILLS

SOME HISTORY OF KIANDRA

Kiandra has at least two claims to fame. Firstly, it was the centre of a large but fairly short-lived gold rush, and secondly it was where the sport of skiing was begun in Australia. The goldfield was officially reported in 1860. It seems the gold was first found by sheep graziers who had been using the area for summer grazing since about 1834. Newspaper reports such as "one party before dinner got 176 oz and another got one lump weighing 19 lb" quickly brought people to the area. By February 1860, 1500 people were on the field and by March this had swelled to 3000 diggers. Two types of alluvial deposits were found - one along the existing watercourses and the other where water had flowed about 40 million years before.

The South Australian Surveyor-General visiting the diggings described the place as "a motley collection of habitation of the very roughest and most primitive kind", with calico as their principal material. He found that the police were sleeping under "an apology for a tent" and the Gold Commissioner in "an unlined calico erection, destitute of a fireplace, and only distinguishable by its superior size". The number of men at Kiandra and on outlying areas reached a peak in April, estimated at 7000. In its heyday Kiandra was reported to have nineteen "grog shanties".

As winter set in stock and men began retreating to lower and warmer places, but many diggers were reluctant to leave. However, as winter proceeded almost all were forced to leave because of the inadequate protection from winds and increasing snowfalls. In the spring, although not as populated as the previous summer, the field had 3000 diggers by September, many of these were Chinese. As the next winter approached, however, and the more accessible deposits were already exhausted, Kiandra's population took to the newly discovered field near Young. By March 1861 "half of the stores were closed, and where it was formerly difficult to elbow one's way through the crowd, it is now a matter of wonder to see half a dozen people" wrote a newspaper reporter.

An official tally of 67,687 ounces of gold won in 1860 on the Kiandra field was the highest total of the year on any N.S.W. field. However, the yield fell drastically in the following two years. Gains increased in the 1880's by using hydraulic sluicing and in 1901 to 1903 by dredging, but after that the yields were small. Kiandra today is a couple of timber buildings and a cemetery, surrounded by the evidence of the diggings and the old mining equipment is now a tourist attraction.

To travel in winter primitive devices were produced to travel over deep snow. The 'Braidwood Observer' reported in 1861 - "the roads are impassable except with snow shoes or the more novel mode of travelling on skates. The skates are constructed of two palings turned up at the front, and about four feet long with straps to put the feet in, and the traveller carries a long stick to balance himself and to assist him up hill. Downhill they can go as fast as a steamer and on the level with the aid of the pole they can make good headway".

As time went by ski-racing and jumping contests came about. Thus the goldfield was a cradle of skiing as a sport long before it developed as such in Austria and Switzerland. As time went by the ski became speedier and more versatile and became increasingly useful for travel and helped in maintaining communications. Today fibreglass and the advent of 'Downhill' skiing are a far cry from the 'palings' of a century ago.

Reference: Wigmore, L. : 1978 : Struggle for the Snowy.

KEVIN MILLS

WHAT OR WHO IS K.H.A.?

The Kosciusko Huts Association (K.H.A. for short) originated in 1970 after a public meeting convened by the National Parks and Wildlife Service with the object of maintaining the huts in the Kosciusko National Park through inviting the co-operation of those who used them. Since then the Association has grown to embrace cross-country ski clubs, fishing groups, scouting groups, school groups, bushwalking clubs and enthusiastic individuals who decide to take responsibility for a particular hut or who simply enjoy walking in the mountains. The aims of K.H.A. are as follows:

1. To foster enjoyment of the national parks, nature reserves and natural bushland of the A.C.T., N.S.W. and Victoria by walkers, skiers, fishermen and others.
2. To advise the N.P. & W.S. in the management and maintenance, use and development of huts in the K.N.P.
3. To assist the N.P. & W.S. in the management and maintenance of huts in the K.N.P.
4. To encourage safety in the mountains and co-operate with organisations responsible for search and rescue operations.
5. To promote conservation of the natural environment of the K.N.P.
6. To co-operate with persons or organisations whose interests, activities or objects are similar to those of the K.H.A.

The Association is curious in that specified caretaker groups have no priority rights to exclusive use of the huts they care for. All huts are available at all times to whoever may wish to stay there, subject, of course, to their capacity. The Association emphasises that one should always be equipped to spend a night in the open in case that hut is full or cannot be found. It also emphasises clean and unselfish use - short visits and the carrying out of all unburnable rubbish.

To become a member of K.H.A. costs \$2.00 a year. The Outdoors Club itself is a member and many club members are individual members. Non-members using huts are requested to pay 50¢ per night. If you walk or ski in the mountains and are interested in the history of the huts and what's happening to them, I recommend you join K.H.A. The address of K.H.A. appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Outdoors Club is associated with the Sports Association and is allocated an amount of money each year to buy equipment for Club use. The equipment is technically the property of the Sports Association. During the year the following equipment was purchased via these funds:

300 feet of climbing/abseiling rope
1 large frame Karrimor Jaquar internal frame pack
1 Paddy Pallin green japarra tent

A request has been put in for a 1980 budget of \$300 from which it is hoped to get a snow/walking tent and other smaller odds and ends.

The club has some obsolete gear which it is hoped to sell. It includes:

3 'A' frame rucksacks
3 nylon tents
2 five gallon plastic containers with lids
1 canvas bush shower

If you are interested in purchasing any of the above make an offer.

KEVIN MILLS

SEARCH AND DESTROY - A Bi-centenary Poem

Fear no more the heat o' the sun
- its rays are filtered, every one
the fumes from car exhausts and fires
from dumps and furnaces aspires
to poison heaven where the bird
sings on a diminished third
or trotters from the well-sprayed tree
replete with years and DDT.
Now nature grinds her basic gears
and big-end knocks, the junk-yard nears...
Now fish float belly-up downstream caught
by chemicals too vague to be fought,
the forests sigh and fall, the hills
blink baldly as the new wind chills
and grasslands waver and are gone,
the concrete nothing blunders on.
Black gold fountains to the sky,
the sands are mined, the sea coasts die,
the land runs ruin to our pride!
Lord, give us, for our pesticide,
two hundred more years like the last
and what shall then withstand the blast?

BRUCE DAVE
Selected Poems - 1971

SOME TIPS ON HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL FEMALE BUSHWALKER

Be discerning about the time of the month you choose to do your bushwalking. Always make sure your sandshoes have good tread for traction on slippery sections. Soles also help. If short, try to grow tall so that you can step over tree trunks lying across the track rather than attempting to climb over them. Try to plan and lead a bushwalk. That way you can set the pace to suit yourself. Grow the hairs on your legs; makes bush bash easier and less painful. If hairs are too black, blonde them. Eat baked beans if you like them. They are an adequate source of incomplete protein. Wet ones are good

Start up your own business to sell custom made female bushwalking equipment. Some women find it difficult to get sleeping bags, woollen socks and woollen shirts to fit them properly.

TRISH LAW

BUSHWALKING FOR FEMALES

Some may still consider that bushwalking and related activities are male-dominated. One has only to venture out into the bush, however, to see just how many females now enjoy this sport. It is perhaps a by-product of "women's lib" that many are now eager to accompany men on trips as equals, extended walks as well as day trips, and to show that they can hold their ground with the men. I have even heard of stories of trips where the expected food dumps did not arrive and after the walk back to civilization with very little food it was found that the women had fared much better than the men physically.

There are still difficulties to be overcome before women can be on completely equal terms with men. I myself have noticed that it is a distinct advantage to have long and very hairy legs when bushwalking. Many's the time I have crossed creeks to find that my male counterparts have completely dry clothes while I have a very uncomfortable "tide mark" half way up my shorts. Tests and comparisons have been made (unofficially, of course!) which prove conclusively that hairy legs get the least number of scratches. Therefore, to all aspiring female bushwalkers - don't shave your legs! (The same tests showed that shaved legs collect by far the most cuts and scratches).

Other drawbacks, however minor, include the purchase of equipment. Most bushwalking stores do not cater for small sizes - socks and wool shirts are just two examples. Sleeping bags seem to come in a uniform length and are usually too long for most women (and short men!). Perhaps when even more women take up the sport and make their opinions heard, this situation will change.

In short, bushwalking is such a variable activity that it can be enjoyed by any age group - male or female. The sense of achievement and companionship are not related to sex but exist on any walk, with male or female companions.

LORRAINE GIBSON

TRY THESE APRICOT OAT BARS ON YOUR NEXT BUSHWALK

<u>Ingredients:</u>	<u>Base</u>	125g Butter
		½ cup Raw Sugar
		½ cup Plain Flour
		½ cup Plain Wholemeal Flour
		½ cup Rolled Oats
	<u>Topping</u>	185g Chopped Dried Apricots
		2 Eggs
		1 cup Brown Sugar
		1/3 cup Self Raising Flour
		1 cup Dessicated Coconut

Method

1. Melt butter, remove from heat and mix with the sugar, flours, oats.
2. Press into a greased 23 cm square tin.
3. Bake moderate 350°F oven 15 minutes.
4. Remove from oven and spread over the topping.
5. Return to oven for 20-25 minutes.
6. Leave in the tin to cool, then cut into bars.

Topping

Cover the apricots with hot water; leave to stand for 10 minutes and then drain. Meanwhile, beat the eggs and beat in the sugar, flour and coconut; fold in

USEFUL ADDRESSES:

Australian Conservation Foundation (A.C.F.),
672B Glenferrie Road,
HAWTHORN, 3122, VICTORIA.

Kosciusko Huts Association (K.H.A.),
P.O. Box 526,
MANUKA, 2603, A.C.T.

National Parks Association of N.S.W. (N.P.A.),
399 Pitt Street,
SYDNEY, 2000, N.S.W.

National Parks & Wildlife Foundation,
110 George Street,
SYDNEY, 2000, N.S.W.

National Parks and Wildlife Service (N.P.&W.S.),
A.D.C. Building,
189-193 Kent Street, SYDNEY, 2000, N.S.W.

N.S.W. Federation of Bushwalking Clubs,
G.P.O. Box 2090,
SYDNEY, 2001, N.S.W.

South Coast Conservation Society (S.C.C.S.),
P.O. Box 1656,
WOLLONGONG, 2500.

BARREN GROUNDS NATURE RESERVE

This nature reserve is close to Wollongong and can easily be visited for a day trip. It is 1,962 hectares of sandstone plateau situated on the Illawarra Escarpment overlooking Jamberoo and the coast. It is reached either by Macquarie Pass, turn off at Robertson, or by Jamberoo Pass which is a very pleasant drive although a dirt road.

Nature reserves are wildlife conservation areas and this is their primary function. In the case of Barren Grounds it was dedicated in 1956 mainly to protect the habitat of the Swamp Parrot and the Eastern Bristle Bird. The reserve consists of many vegetation types. However, the main attraction is the flowering heath plants of the 'hanging swamp' community. A number of walking tracks are open to the public. The Griffiths Track is an 8 km circular track starting and ending at the parking area. This track takes in many vegetation types and offers views up the coast from the Illawarra lookout and features the natural stone bridge. Tracks on the western side go to lookouts over the upper Kangaroo Valley.

Besides the wildflowers and views the reserve is the home of many birds including Grey Currawongs, Emuwren, Gang-gang Cockatoos, many Honeyeaters and the occasional Lyrebird. You may be lucky and see the Swamp Parrot as I did.

Another area nearby worth a visit is Buderoo Plateau and Gerringong Falls, even if to compare this unmanaged area with the Barren Grounds Reserve. It is situated to the west of Barren Grounds and looks over the Kangaroo Valley and is a haven for irresponsible four-wheel-drivers, trailbikers and car body dumpers. The N.P. & W.S. is apparently looking into acquiring this area which would add substantially to the viability of the present reserve. If you are looking for somewhere to go for a day, especially at present when the wildflowers are out, I can recommend a day at Barren Grounds. Take your lunch and spend the whole day amongst the wildflowers.

WRITING LETTERS

One way the individual can influence Government policy is to write letters to State and Federal members, Premiers and the Prime Minister. You will always receive some sort of reply from your letter. A number of Club members have written letters about various environmental issues to parliamentarians and government instrumentalities over the past year. Issues raised ranged from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the use of aircraft over wilderness areas. You can do something about the environment you live in and the state it is in decades to come. Become involved, become informed and form opinions. Write letters about issues that most concern you. These could include The Great Barrier Reef, National Park dedication, especially wilderness areas, and local issues such as the Coal Loader, the escarpment or the recent Draft Illawarra Regional Plan. The recent Terania Creek issue has shown that people are not about to sit around and let the quality of their environment deteriorate even further.

KEVIN MILLS

ONE WILDERNESS ETHOS

'In wilderness is the preservation of the world'.

Henry Thoreau, 1851.

'These temple destroyers, devotees of ravaging commercialism, seem to have a perfect contempt for nature, and instead of lifting their eyes to the God of the Mountain, lift them to the Almighty Dollar'.

John Muir, 1912, on a proposal to build a reservoir in a Sierra Valley.

'... our last wilderness is rapidly disappearing under assaults of increasing population and an aggressive technology. Australia, unlike so many other countries still has a chance to set aside a few major wilderness areas. But that chance will soon be lost.'

Report of the National Estate, 1974.

'When you're out in the wilderness, you need a partner that is all heart... Land Cruiser is. It will take any road. And when there's no road, it makes its own.'

Add for Toyota vehicle, 1979.

'80 per cent of Victorians surveyed disagreed with the statement - "the preservation of wilderness is a waste of time". Eighteen per cent agreed.'

Survey by McKenry, 1975.

'During the 1970 season 106,000 people, about 44% more than the preceding year, came into desolation (an American wilderness area) and very nearly loved the place to death'.

Ezra Brown, 1972.

'A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.'

Definition of wilderness - United States Wilderness Act, 1964.

'The mining industry opposes the concept of wilderness areas as defined in Commonwealth legislation and particularly its application to huge areas as proposed by the A.C.F. While the wilderness concept may have application in parts of the African and North American continents, it is unsuited to the Australian environment because of the high volatility of this country's natural bushland. Australia's conservation areas, therefore, need careful and constant husbanding to prevent their complete devastation by bushfires. Such an approach would not preclude the temporary intrusion of certain mineral activities.'

From Australian Mining Industry Council

'There is just one hope of repulsing the tyrannical ambition of civilization to conquer every niche on the whole earth. That hope is the organisation of spirited people who will fight for the freedom of the wilderness'.

Robert Marshall

RAMBLING AND SCRAMBLING IN SOUTH AMERICA -

by International Correspondent Dave Whitelaw

The following ramblings from a W.U.C.O. rep. may be the forerunner of more outdoorly yarns from over the big briny (including Bass Straight) by other W.U.C.O. types, if the editor has his way, and a good thing too. All it needs now is some fabulously well paying sponsorship for W.U.C.O. to travel and write and a new august international W.U.C.O. newsheet will be in the making.

Distances being as vast as they are in South America, I was limited by time and money to first travelling around Columbia, Ecuador and Peru in the six weeks I had available. I had originally planned on seeing something like thirteen South American countries and all points from the Amazon River and Arthur Conan Doyle's "Lost World" to Tierra Del Fuego at the extreme south of South America.

Travelling long distances by bus and train became rather tiring even when in a comfortable seat and plane travel wasn't without its hassles, e.g. numerous cancellations. The Indians being short legged persons, meant that bus seats were somewhat cramped and together with chickens and ducks and chain smoking foreigners, even short trips became an endurance test. Travel on the roads also can be downright dangerous, with Fangio imitations at every wheel; meaning that frequent rest stops were a necessity and thus made a mountain climb or a hike in the sub-alpine "Paramor" or a walk around the villages or old ruins an attractive alternative. Notwithstanding, all of this travelling is a necessary evil in order to experience the cultural and architectural possibilities which were indeed profuse. As well, the roads and railways did pass through much spectacular mountain scenery, usually with sheer drops from road edge to distant valleys below, and which left some lasting impressions on my mind. Those who've humped a pack on their travels will know how much exercise is involved in walking around town in search of suitable accommodation (even with the use of a student guide-book) that is, providing you're not too slack and prefer taxis instead. This, however, can be considered good training for the inevitable Andean mountain climb.

Ecuador provides a smorgasbord of magnificent snow capped volcanic mountains, best viewed at any time except March +/- one month (the height of the rainy season and the time when I was there). In the northern half of Ecuador the Andes consists of two parallel chains of volcanoes, the easterly and westerly, separated by a plateau. Here only 100 miles separates Amazon lowlands from Pacific coastal lowlands, in this the narrowest section of the Andes. The most important peaks of the western chain are N to S, Cotacachi (16,204 ft.), Pichincha (15,696 ft.), Illiniza (17,277 ft.) and Chimborazo (20,561 ft.). In the eastern chain are Cayambe (18,996 ft.), Antisana (18,717 ft.), Cotopaxi (19,347 ft.), Tungurahua (16,457 ft.), Altar (17,457 ft.) and Sangay (17,159 ft.).

I'd been in Banos (1800m) at the base of Mt. Tungurahua (5020m) for a couple of days recuperating from a trip into the Orient when one of two German guys (I'd joined up with in Colombia) and myself, decided we'd have a go at the volcano just out of town. Over a distance of 8 km we were to climb 3200m via a well worn track from the outskirts of town. The problem was that the weather had been constantly drizzling and misty, especially in the morning and we considered that the trip wouldn't be worth doing if we couldn't see anything along the route. Because of growing impatience we decided that if the weather looked fine the next morning when we awoke we'd make a bolt for the top. Otherwise we'd call it off.

On the chosen morning at 6.00 am all looked well so we headed down to the markets for some fruit, bread and bottled mineral water and cheese. After a quick breakfast we were off by 7.15 am. Our idea was to make reasonable time and climb as far as we could on the day and then retreat back to Nicolas Mantinez Refugio Hut at 4000m. We anticipated that if the weather did remain fine then it wouldn't last more than a day. We did, in fact, make good time for the first section until we came to Angelo Perez's shop where we wasted half-an-hour purchasing tickets for the use of the hut and acquiring ice picks and crampons. Not having used the latter before I wasn't sure of my ability to use them. Still, we weren't confident we'd even reach the snowline which was higher up than normal at that time of year we were assured. In winter it falls to about the altitude of the Refuge Hut, the latitude being only 100 miles or so from the equator. Other parties we heard were coming up behind us and they had the use of mules (also hired out by above) to carry their packs. Getting directions from the shop, ^{and} a 4 ft.-nothing friendly Indian farmer we met, we pushed on up a pretty slippery muddy track which gave us no relief in that it seemed to get steeper as we went. We tired badly as the altitude increased, so that every twenty paces required a half minute break to regain breath. About half way up we were overtaken by two donkeys laden with gear and two young donkey drivers who took it in turns on another donkey. Oh, for an ass now, we thought!

At about 12.45 pm or five hours of walking later we arrived at the Hut thoroughly exhausted. Soon after arriving we were met by the first of six guys from one group whose packs had overtaken us. They were to rest up at the Hut that afternoon and night and attempt the walk at 5.00 am the next morning. We had a lunch of buns, cheese, fruit and choc-crackles I'd brought from Australia. Since we'd finished our water in one go half way up we got more water from a seemingly stagnant pool 100m up the track using a shirt to sieve out the debris. After 1½ hours of resting, sitting in the sun, we set out again at 2.15 pm for the snow above, which we could see through drifts in the cloud. Initially the climb was steady and no more difficult than before, but as we progressed it became more like a scree slope and required the use of the ice picks to prevent us sliding downwards. This extra effort and the rarefied air meant a climb of less than ten paces a time before a rest was forced upon us. At this stage a cold biting wind which blew stones up into our faces made us shelter behind some rocks for a while. About 5.00 pm we reached a cross at 4820m. The cross was in remembrance of two Germans who died in a blizzard in 1951 from severe injuries when they fell. At this stage the mist, which we had been climbing into, seemed to be intensifying, so after a 15 minute rest we decided that retreat downhill was in order, despite the snowline being in close proximity. It was getting late and besides we were exhausted. On the way down, as on the way up, we were afforded with great views of Baños Ambato and all the surrounding mountains and valleys including Mt. Chimborazo. It took us only 40 minutes to slip and slide that which took us 2 3/4 hours to climb and we still had 15 minutes of light left. A congenial night was spent talking with other walkers, their knowledge of English being a bigger asset to this than my expertise of Spanish. Noisy snorers later that night were surely trying to compete with my cacophony, however, I was too tired to care.

The morning saw it pouring rain (as we suspected it would) so we were content to slip and slide our way back to Baños at the bottom and to the hot baths. The others in the Hut, also on limited time, reluctantly headed back down also, for the whole mountain was completely fogged over. Later that night in Baños we saw colour slides of the crater up Tungurahua and others shown by a British climber of his previous climbs. This had the affect of both heightening our disappointment and of whetting our appetite for more. Fools never learn!

My high altitude walks after this were restricted to those near Cuzco, Peru, at about 4000m, however "Peru has probably more to offer the mountaineer than any other Andean country", although its highest peak, 22205 ft. Mt. Huascaran, is succeeded in height by a number of summits in Argentina and Chile.

One city I visited, Arequipa in the south of Peru, is towered over by the 19098 ft. volcano El Misti "which is considered one of the easiest climbs in the world for its height". Looking rather hot and uninviting (it's almost snow free - being situated in the hot dry coastal strip). I prudently decided to give it a miss, easy climb or not. (Some other W.U.C.O. can do that!)

Handy references: "Mountains of the World"
by William Bueller, publishers - Mountaineers, U.S.A.

"The Student Guide to Latin America"
by the Council on International Educational Exchange
(beware of out-of-date information)

"The South American Handbook" - gives history, politics,
geography, scenic attractions, hotels, etc.

A WINTER TALE

"Unto the utmost bound the everlasting hills". I stood beside the morning fire considering the phrase as the rolling mists and wind-blown snow were again obscuring the view. It didn't really matter. I knew what was there, these quintessential mountains, not exactly lofty, certainly majestic, haughty and hypnotic. That's Kosciusko alright. We were camped on the snow in a small clump of snow gums. It was cold but beautiful. I felt small, alone and mortal.

Everlasting hills? No way, old they may be by human terms but not everlasting. These rounded hills were already the mark of a mountains demise. The mortality of mountains, of man and in between that of other species. Such sombre musings on a winters evening, I was surrounded by the glory of Kosciusko. Why not enjoy it and absorb the serenity of the hills? Why must I look for unsettling connections between geologic erosion and the mortality of living things? Why? Because the serenity is fragile and the connections real.

Mans activities is causing the extinction somewhere of at least one species of plant or animal every day. The result must be an environment with less beauty, variety and solace. What price will we pay for the broken fabric of the biosphere?

I thought of how people used National Parks by rushing through as fast as possible, snapping a few pictures and returning home renewed to the largely unnatural environment in which most of us spend our lives. Returning home all too likely with the complacent feeling that because the many splendors of the Kosciusko National Park and its flora and fauna had been "saved". It matters less what ecological havoc is wrought back home.

God save us from environmental tokenism. I hope that all is not lost, for a more gentle human race might learn to treat the planet like a park.

OWEN MANLEY

SOUTH WEST TASMANIA: A TEMPERATE WILDERNESS UNDER THREAT

"What would the world be, once bereft
Of wet and of wilderness? Let them be left,
O let them be left, wildness and wet;
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet."

Gerard Manley Hopkins

South West Tasmania is probably the most rugged and inaccessible area in Australia. In a continent having few extensive mountainous areas, this corner of the island state abounds in mountain ranges and accompanying myriads of lakes created by glacial action up to the later Pleistocene. The predominant rock type is quartzite, some of it having undergone intensive folding.

The South West is also noted for its rugged and spectacular coastline. The Helman report (University of New England, 1976) identified only one coastal wilderness area in N.S.W., Nadgee, which is relatively small. The South West coast of Tasmania is an extensive coastal wilderness of a type to be found nowhere else in Australia and which is eminently suitable for bushwalking and nature appreciation.

The South West is also unique by virtue of its flora, much of which is endemic to this area or to the highland areas of Tasmania. Among the better known species are Huon Pine, Horizontal "Scrub" and Varnished Gum, a eucalypt which, when fully grown, is less than 1 metre high.

The South West National Park is internationally recognised by UNESCO as a Biosphere Reserve and as such is considered to be a sample of one of the world's major ecosystem types.

Thus, the South West should be seen as an area of importance for all Australians. Apart from its uniqueness it should be remembered that its lakes and mountains are in marked contrast to what normally passes for "typical" Australian landscape and as such should be protected to the greatest extent possible.

During the 19th century there was extensive logging of Huon Pine which grows mainly on the banks of the Western rivers. Apart from this the area was virtually untouched until recent times, notwithstanding forestry operations on the fringes of the area, occupation by a small number of aborigines concentrated on the coast, the settlement of Port Davey by the King family and sporadic visits by bushwalkers.

The situation changed in 1963 when the State Government received a federal grant to construct a road deep into the area to help estimate the hydro electric power potential of the region.

In 1967 bills introduced in State Parliament gave power to the Hydro Electric Commission (H.E.C.) to expend \$116 million on development in the South West and also gave control to the Commission of the South West Fauna District (an area of 642,000 hectares) and Lake Pedder National Park. Details of the proposed development were kept extremely quiet and alternatives to the flooding of Lake Pedder were not disclosed by the H.E.C. or the Government except inadvertently and at a late stage when final plans had been made.

Despite enormous opposition, the flooding of Lake Pedder commenced in 1972. Subsequently, a Federal Committee of Enquiry into the matter was very critical of the manner in which decisions had been taken and was indirectly extremely critical of the H.E.C. For example, they found "There was insufficient or inadequate investigation of several major factors relevant to the flooding... inadequate investigation of possible alternatives... scientific investigation was totally inadequate... no real attempt to investigate the aesthetic and recreational values of Lake Pedder... no attempt to take account of public views."

Since then the situation has not changed much, if at all. Since 1972 Precipitous Bluff, originally excluded from the South West National Park, had been under threat of limestone quarrying and forestry operations. It is still possible to read in an H.E.C. brochure on Gordon River Power Development "Tasmania's 'empty quarter' is the last and most difficult corner of Australia to be entered and conquered by man."

In 1975 the State Government appointed the Southwest Advisory Committee (the Cartland Committee) to recommend on future management of the whole South West area. During the enquiry existing development activities in the area were allowed to continue, roads being constructed in haste by the Forestry Commission. The Cartland report was published in 1978 and is very disappointing from the conservationist viewpoint. Although the Committee was "totally convinced of the importance of South West Tasmania from the point of view of its natural and aesthetic value" it nevertheless recommended in a manner which would give would-be developers an opportunity to argue separately for each new case for development as new ideas for development occur.

Following the Cartland report, the Government announced in March 1979 that it would establish a South West Committee which would be able to make recommendations to the Government. The Government also appears committed to ensuring that there is no diminution of existing development rights so that the outlook for conservation in the South West is not good.

In trying to understand the reasons for the poor record of Tasmanian Governments on the conservation of the South West, it must be remembered that Tasmania is a small, isolated and economically vulnerable State. Because of the transport problems resulting from isolation by sea, industries and potential employers are all too likely to prefer a mainland location so that the Government feels compelled to bend over backwards to placate developmental interests. For this reason, too, the Labour and Liberal parties have every appearance of being Tweedledum and Tweedledee on conservation matters (not to mention others, like Canberra bashing). Also, Tasmania already has a high percentage of lands in National Parks (about 10%) - more than any other state. Of course, Tasmania has more lands of National Park potential as well.

The Federal Government has accepted some responsibility for assisting in the State's special economic problems - the present Freight Equalisation Scheme is an example. If Tasmania, in the interests of Australia as a whole, is to have a substantially greater percentage of lands in National Parks (for example by greatly enlarging the present South West National Park), then it may not be unreasonable to expect the Commonwealth to compensate in some way.

Finally, I would like to mention some of the specific threats to the South West. These appear to be:

1. Construction of a dam on the Lower Davey River.
2. A dam on the Lower Gordon River accompanied by dams on the King and Franklin Rivers.
3. Construction of forestry roads into the South West.
4. Possible future mining operations.

Any dams on the Lower Gordon or Davey Rivers would have a very serious effect on the area from the viewpoint of creating an enlarged National Park in the South West as they would necessitate the construction of further roads into the heart of the region. According to the Launceston "Examiner" of 1st August, 1979, the Gordon dam will be recommended to the H.E.C. in September 1979. This dam would flood a large section of the Franklin River gorge - this would destroy the wilderness quality of this river which is one of the last wild rivers in Australia and which almost encircles Franchman's Cap National Park (13,000 hectares), at present a wilderness area.

At present a moratorium prevents new roads being constructed in the South West, but this situation may be temporary only, pending Parliamentary approval of forestry management plans.

You are urged to write to the Australian Government calling upon it to

- (a) Recommend the South West for nomination to the World Heritage, and
- (b) Take positive steps to protect the South West of Tasmania.

You are also urged to write to the Tasmanian Government and

- (a) Call upon it to declare the Franklin and Lower Gordon region a wilderness area within an enlarged South West National Park (as proposed, for example, by the Australian Conservation Foundation) and
- (b) Call for an independent enquiry into the State's energy needs.

The relevant addresses are:

- (a) Senator J. Webster,
Minister for Science and the Environment,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA, A.C.T. 2600.
- (b) The Hon. A. Lohrey, M.L.A.,
Minister for the Environment and National Parks,
Parliament House,
HOBART, TAS. 7000.

You may also care to join or support the Tasmanian Wilderness Society, 102 Bathurst Street, Hobart, 7000.

Acknowledgement Much of the factual information in the above has been gleaned from the "South West Book", published by the Australian Conservation Foundation and available from them. It is beautifully illustrated as well as being a mine of information on the South West.

Dr. R.V. Nilsen (A Tasmanian)

(Extract from "Smoke Signal" Journal of the South Coast Conservation Society, September 1979, Vol. 10 No. 9)

W.U.C.O. TRIP SUMMARY - 1979

- February 17-18 : Wollangambe Gorge, lilo trip.
- March 11 : Marley Beach, day walk.
- 17-18 : Yalwal Creek, beginners walk.
- 31-April 1 : Nattai River, bushwalk.
- April 8 : Mt. Keira, abseiling.
- 13-16 : Colo Wilderness, bushwalk.
- 28-29 : Bungonia, caving.
- May 15-20 : Pilot Wilderness, bushwalk.
- June 30-July 5 : Western Blue Mountains, car trip.
- July 6-14 : X-country skiing, Munyang-Mawsons.
- 21-22 : X-country skiing, day trips.
- 28-29 : X-country skiing, day trips.
- August 4-5 : X-country skiing, Albina Hut.
- 11-12 : X-country skiing, Cascade Hut.
- 18-19 : X-country skiing, day trips.
- 25-31 : 1. X-country skiing - Jagungal.
2. X-country intervarsity - Mt. Buller.
- September 1-9 : X-country skiing - Grey Mare.
- 29-Oct 1 : Budawangs, bushwalking.
- October 21 : Mt. Keira, abseiling.
- 22 : Little River, day walk.
- 27-28 : MacDonal Wilderness, bushwalking.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

After taking over from the previous Secretary, Jenny Chapman, I found that there was not a great deal for me to do. Letters have been written to Government authorities concerning such issues as the new Wollemi National Park and the Jone's Creek issue. The Club is in the process of joining the Federation of Bushwalking Clubs in N.S.W. and information has been received on this matter with formal membership likely early next year. The coming year is sure to be very active with many conservation issues to be resolved, which should prove to be interesting for the next secretary.

JAMES SLIGAR

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

On reflecting over the Outdoors Club's activities in the past year, it is amazing the number of places visited and the things we've done. Different Club members have been as far away as Canada, North and South America, New Zealand and Tasmania.

The years activities include bushwalks, caving, canyoning, abseiling and lots of skiing (downhill and especially cross-country). Social activities include the Union Dinner, Graduation and Commem Balls, as well as the usual parties and BBQ's. At the Club meetings we have seen slides of members' trips both at home and abroad. Some highlights were the slides of Peter Stanley's trip through Europe, Dave Whitelaw's American National Parks and Rod Nilsen's skiing in Canada. The best of these were entered in the Camera Club's Annual Exhibition since several Outdoors Club members belong to both clubs.

The year got off to a flying, if wet, start with the annual beginners bushwalk along Ettrema Creek (Morton N.P.). The Club will supply wine and a three-course meal, which includes strawberries and pavlova, to new-comers again next year when the beginners walk goes to Hidden Valley (Morton N.P.). Marley Beach and Little River on the Shoalhaven were visited as day walks. Weekend trips have seen us on Starlights' track at the Nattai River, liloing down the Wollangambe Canyon on air beds, walking in the Morton and Blue Mountains National Parks. Longer trips have been to the Colo River Gorge, the Pilot (Kosciusko National Park), the Warrumbungles and the wineries at the Hunter Valley, Mudgee and Griffith. Apart from one weekend caving at Bungonia and one spent lying in the sun at Werri Beach the rest of the year was spent skiing. Three members went to Mt. Buller (Victoria) as part of the intervarsity ski team and competed in all the cross-country events. Lorraine Gibson did especially well. On most weekends a ski trip was organised and eventually Threadbo, Perisher, Siggins Holes, the Main Range, Cascades, Cesjacks and the Whites River region were all visited. Two extended ski tours were also organised into the Mt. Jagungal Wilderness area, visiting Grey Mare, Valentines River and Mawsons.

Socially, the highlight of the year was the Union Dinner and the Club will organise a table again next year. Since many of the members will be continuing their courses next year, here's to 1980 being another good year.

My thanks must go to the members of the Club Executive: Lorraine Gibson - V.P., Jim Sligar - Secretary, and Kevin Mills - Publicity Officer and Q.M. for the considerable support that they have given me throughout the year and to the other Club members for their active participation.

OWEN MANLEY