

NEWSLETTER NUMBER THREE

AUGUST 1980

President

Kevin Mills
(84 2656)

Secretary

Lorraine Gibson
(28 0148)

FINANCIAL REPORT TO 30TH JUNE 1980

<u>Expenditure:</u>	Beginners Bushwalk	\$12.00	
	Catering - Meetings	\$50.13	
	Barbecue	\$110.80	
	K.H.A. Membership	\$5.00	
	N.P.A. Membership	\$15.00	\$192.93
<u>Income:</u>	Membership Fees	\$65.00	
	Barbecue Tickets	\$101.10	\$166.10
	Difference of Expenditure over Income:	\$26.83	
	Balance of Account at 30th June 1980:	\$102.15	

SUMMARY OF SESSION ONE ACTIVITIES

		<u>NUMBER</u>
March	16th : Beginners Abseiling Day, Mt. Keira	12
	22nd-23rd : Beginners Bushwalk, Budawang.	14
	29th -30th : Bushwalking, Ettrema	2
April	4th-7th : Bushwalking, Mother Woila	5
	20th : Cycling, Robertson	10
	25th-27th : Bushwalking, Kanangra	4
May	17th-18th : Beginners Navigation Walk, Yalwal	8
June	8th : Daywalk, Royal National Park	11
	15th-16th : Bushwalking, Ettrema	2
	22nd : Daywalk, Gerringong Falls	9
	28th-29th : Bushwalking, Ettrema	3
July	1st-4th : Cross-country Skiing	3
	5th-6th : Cross-country Skiing	8

Total number of people/days = 164

TRIP REPORT - ETTREMA WILDERNESS

Maps: Nerriga 1:25000; Sassafras 1:25000; Yalwal 2 inch : 1 mile.
 Date: 15th-16th June
 Activity: Bushwalking
 Route: Plain Creek - Bundundah Creek - Moore Creek
 Party: Jim Sligar, Kevin Mills

This was another in the Sligar-Mills series of Ettrema Expeditions. The walk began from the saddle between Jones Creek and Plain Creek, on the Ettrema Ridge track off the Nerriga road. Although Saturday night was clear-skyed, Sunday dawned very foggy and damp. The route to Bundundah Creek was across the Plain Creek valley, in and out of Moore Creek and onto the Western cliffline of Bundundah Creek.

Closely watching the map avoided navigation errors due to the foggy conditions, there is enough prominent landmarks to make the job easier. From the cliffline views were obtained, as far as the conditions allowed, up and down Bundundah Creek. An easy pass was found through the cliffline (Lyre-Bird Pass; Mills/Sligar, 1980). On a rock ledge we found a lyre-bird nest. A large stick structure, this one with an egg inside resting securely amongst some of mothers down feathers.

After a very steep climb down we arrived at the creek bed. Although somewhat narrower, it is the same picturesque little creek as it is further down stream at Yalwal. There was plenty of wild-life around as is usual of the Ettrema area in general, azure kingfisher, wonga pigeon and king parrot to name a few.

We arrived at our campsite on the Moore Creek junction in plenty of time before dark and went looking for the Bundundah Falls. These were found not to exist, unless they were no more than 30 cm high, nor did the large pool of water indicated on the map below the 'falls'. Just as we were about to turn back we across a dingo, the poor fellow having to jump into the water to get away from us, we'd been walking in the water all day and it was very cold. We spent the rest of the afternoon, there was not really much left, drinking hot drinks and listening to Ansett and T.A.A. chase each other overhead.

The next day dawned with the valley full of lyre-birds giving a grand display of their mimicing abilities. As many as half a dozen other species being copied in quick succession. After a quick breakfast we headed off up Moore Creek, hoping that the other falls on the map, Williams Falls, were a reality. As the mist cleared the day turned out to be sunny and warm. The creek became narrower and steeper as the position of the falls was reached.

What we did find was not one waterfall, but a series of three, and further along another series of three. Each dropping 30 metre or more. These are formed as the creek cuts its way through folded sediments of Devonian age, which form a secondary cliffline below the Permian Nowra Sandstone in this area.

As we continued upstream a pair of ever-present wedge-tailed eagles circled the cliffs high above us. Moore Creek is a beautiful little creek, a mixture of pools, cascading water and huge boulders. Large Casuarinas and water-gums stand defiantly in mid-stream against flood waters, while figs and rock orchids cling to the gorge walls and the ubiquitous Eucalypt defying gravity on cliff faces above. Above the first falls the creek climbs very steeply, count the brownies on the map! Once onto the overlying sandstone the creek flattens out, but becomes chocked up with boulders and trees. Hence this is a good place to leave the creek. After finding a way through the cliffline (Lunch Pass; Sligar/Mills, 1980) we sat on the edge and had lunch, looking back down the previous mornings route and over onto the Ettrema Plateau.

The rest of the walk was easy, an hours walk up the open Plain Creek valley. On the way we got some close encounters of the roo kind in the form of grey kangaroos.

Before we were back at the car we were already planning another trip in the area.

KEVIN MILLS

The following standard reply was received from the Premier, Mr. Wran, to the Club's letter regarding the Washpool rainforest and wilderness;

The Premier of New South Wales

Dear Mr. Mills,

Thank you for letting me know your views about Washpool State Forest.

As you may be aware, this matter has now been considered by the Government.

The company concerned has not been given approval to log in Washpool State Forest. Instead, it will be allowed to selectively log small areas of Ewinger and Billilimbra State forests

Additionally, the Government has requested that the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement on Washpool State Forest be expediated.

Yours sincerely,

Neville Wran,
Premier.

The Washpool State Forest is near Grafton in the north of the state. It contains the largest area of rainforest, left in N.S.W. and is part of the Washpool Wilderness identified by Helman et.al. in their study of wilderness in South-East Australia.

What you can do -

- find out more about the area and become informed on what is going on,
- sign one of the petitions now circulating,
- write a letter to the Premier and/or your local member.

SKI TOURING EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

As the ski season has arrived it is appropriate that a list of equipment for X-country skiing be drawn up to help guide any newcomers to the sport. It is most important that this "guide" be followed and each person participating on W.U.C.O. trips is adequately equipped. Don't take it upon yourself to make shortcuts with equipment. Trip leaders cannot be expected to ensure the safety of those who are ill-equipped.

Clothing:

- 1 x Woollen Pants (ex-army disposals ideal)
- 3 x Socks (Pairs) (long thick woollen)
- 2 x Shirts (woollen and/or flannelette)
- 2 x Jumpers (two thin ones better than one thick)
- 1 x Waterproof Coat (a most important item - oilskins ideal)
(NO DOWNHILL PARKAS OR SPRAYJACKETS!)
- 1 x Beanie or Balaclava (preferably the latter, or both)
- 1 x Sunglass or Snowglasses
- 1 x Goggles (Probably optional, good for very bad weather)
- 1 x Gloves (woollen mittens with nylon overmitts are good or at least good quality leather gloves)
- 1 x Overpants (optional - may be advisable for beginners)
- 1 x Gaiters (optional - makes skiing more comfortable though)

Survival Gear:

- 1 x Tent (consult leader, the Club owns a proper snow tent)
- 1 x DOWN Sleeping Bag (this item's importance cannot be over emphasised)
- 1 x Closed-cell Foam Mat (no matter how good your sleeping bag is)
- 1 x Groundsheet (may be shared between two people)
- 1 x Gas or Shellite Stove (may be shared)
 - Waterproof matches (e.g. Greenlites)
 - Candles (ideal for use in huts)
 - Lipcream, sunburn cream (sun reflects off the snow)
 - Whistle (in case you get separated in fog, while out, etc.)
- 1 x Pack (to somehow carry all this gear)
- 1 x Yowie trap (the mountains are full of them)

Cooking:

The best system is to organise yourselves into food groups for the purpose of meals and the carrying of utensils. The group should have:-

- 1 x Frypan
- 2 x Billies
- Knife, fork each member
- Sharp knife (for bread, cheese etc.)
- Mugs and plates (a deep plate is more versatile - uses include cereal and main course, cheesecake making, etc.)

Food: Food is virtually the same as for bushwalks. It is more important when ski-touring to take along readily digestible foods, e.g., nuts, dried fruits, glucose, chocolate, etc. The following list may help you in choosing what to take:

Porridge, muesli, dried milk, fresh meat (first two days), dried foods, (e.g. Rosella, Vesta, Alliance, home-made jerky, etc.), dried peas/corn, rice, macaroni, salami, cheese, butter, tea/coffee/milo, dried fruit, flour (for dampers and pancakes), fruit drink (e.g., "Start", "Refresh"), halva, bread (solid loaf, e.g. black bread, rye, wholemeal), honey, jam, packet cheesecakes, jelly, custard powder, instant puddings.

TRIP REPORT - YALWAL CREEK

Map: Yalwal, C.M.A. 2 inch : 1 mile.
Date: 17th-18th May
Activity: Bushwalking & Beginners Navigation
Route: Yalwal and Bundundah Creeks
Party: 8

Happenings at Corroboree Flat.
(or the Yowies of Yalwal).
(must be read like 'The Man From Snowy River').

There was movement at the Uni, 'cos the word had got around that the trip to Corroboree Flat was underway.

The mission had got started with the news of Yowies striking and it well might made the bravest hold their breath but the bunch of raw beginners who had gathered there that day, knew little of the fears that lay ahead, for the mood was gay and happy, and the day so bright and sunny that it warmed away the thoughts they may have had.

There was Kev the brave, our leader and Manly Owen too, and even blackbeard Pete and Bruce the bold. There was laughing lovely Lizzie, and chuckling cuddly Cathy, sexy Steve and stirrer and the charming Caroline.

We parked our cars at Yalwal by the waterfall where the dam has banked the waters far beyond and with packs on back we crossed it and up the other side we climbed until we left it all behind.

It was quickly apparent that our leader was astray, gaily gathering mushrooms in a field and so the brave beginners began to lead the way, trusting map and compass to guide them all the way.

And little by little we climbed until we reached a lofty outcrop with a view, ahead, to where we knew we had to go. A safer place from worry, of attack, we could not find, and so it was unanimous to munch on lunchawhile. It was while they sat there watchfully, that Kev chewed upon a thought why not creep down Eureka Creek and arrive before dark, than to cross the plateau and take a chance.

And so we gathered up our gear, and headed for the creek, but on the way we chanced upon Clarke's Saddle. There was not a sign of Clarke or even his horse, and we could only hold the gravest fears. The bush began to thicken, and injuries accumulate, why even Carol was bleeding from a scratch. Owen ever helpful, gave words of advice, you need to grow more hairs upon your legs, to which she said would, should she survive. But soon we were upon the creek, mountain wine to wash our throats, and for an easier path we could not wish. Ever quicker did we rush along the way, until when weary legged, a rest was called. This is where we had our lunch, not year a year ago, said Kev to reassure us, but we knew it was his mind gone made, for even braver men would not this way have come before.

Once on the way again, two scouts were sent ahead, for Corroboree Flat lay not too far away. At the junction of Bundundah and on the other side, we saw it was deserted, for the corroborees had finished and the danger gone away.

We found a place along the bank, just great to pitch a tent, and set up camp before the sun had set it was night. It was not long before, the campfire had sprung alight and we took our goodies from our packs and cooked them to delight. The dark had come on quickly, no moon to attend, and the chill of the evening, pushed us nearer to the first. A shrill cry from the trees nearby, sent shivers up our spines, was it not the dreaded Yowie that we come to find?

I wanted none of it, and neither did the rest, so back and forth the bull was flung, of simpler mind than us, could stand to hear that rubbish and also come to fight. Owen was the Chef supreme, for from a mucky mess mixed in his cooking pot, rose the fastest banana cake, that ever hit the spot. We slept soundly through the night, and rose to the sun a-playing in the trees, for we no longer felt there was more to fear.

A casual breakfast, saw us on our way, across the creek and along the other side.

across a pass, leading back via Yalwal Creek. It was pleasant going, and from the top we saw, below, the pastures of McKenzie homestead spread across the hills, and we made our way there, to the creek, and crossed from stone to stone, but we were not prepared for what we saw, for the homestead lay in ruins and the sliprails were away.

We picked amongst the ruins, and gazed upon the rails, there was not a soul and fear began to rise. Lets get out of here and go down by the creek, and so we did.

A little later on the party split in two. One going along the creek, the other in the hills, for some must live to tell the tale.

Steve and I, and Liz and Bruce took the lower route, and fate was on our side for the brown eyes gazing from the trees, re-treated as we came, and disappeared with dashing hoofs towards the other group.

We arrived back at our cars, before the sun had set, we'd passed the Aboriginal mine diggings, there was not a stir, and by the placid waters only one event occurred, when I ruthlessly was attacked by a vicious tree. But the others fought it off and I was saved.

We looked amongst the cars, but the others were not there, we even checked the ancient burial place, and far beyond a Yowie lair, marked on our map as diggings from a golden age, yielded nought, as well it might.

So we left for home.

And the others, we have not learned, a mystery is their plight, but should you chance on one of them (be it Kev or Cath or Owen or Carol) be warned and be advised, they surely could not have survived, and are probably Yowies in disguise.

Peter Stanley,
(poetic license applied for).

ECOLOGY ALONG THE TRACK : NO. 2

Close Encounters of the Bird Kind.

Australia contains about 650 species of birds with about another 50 being irregular visitors, making a total of about 700 species recorded for Australia and surrounding seas. For comparison New Zealand supports 250 species and South America about 3000 species are indigenous. Although this may suggest a paucity of Australian species, a closer look shows that areas of the country contain a rich and diverse number of species. For example the Royal National Park has recorded 201 native species in its 15,000 hectares, and about 120 species have been recorded for the Illawarra Escarpment area.

About 310 species of the Australian avifauna belong to the one order - the Passeriformes. The passerines are often called songbirds or perching birds, although neither describes them adequately. The characters which separate the order Passeriformes are mainly anatomical. The foot of the passerine has three toes directed forward, free of any webbing or jointing, and one toe directed backwards. The other orders of birds have different toe arrangements. Slater (1974) has given a general outline of the passerines as follows - most passerines are quite small, the exceptions being the lyre-bird and the crows. None swim or make their living on salt or fresh water. As a generalisation, they may be thought of as "small bush birds".

For anyone bushwalking in south-east Australia the large number of bird species becomes quite apparent. In a single days walking in the Northern Budawangs, for example, the walker can pass through a number of different habitats with their characteristic bird species. These can include rainforest, wet and dry sclerophyll, heath and swamp. rocky outcrops and river beds are two further types of habitat present. Some species are very restricted in their habitat preference, while others appear to be almost ubiquitous. The high soaring of a wedge-tailed eagle overhead and the morning calls of the lyre-bird are well known to the bush-camper in the eastern highlands. The ground parrot on the other hand is restricted to the low heath and swamp areas, such as at Barren Grounds Nature Reserve.

Birdwatching is increasing in popularity as people find that much pleasure can be derived from observing and studying our varied avifauna. Birdwatching and study can be easily combined with bushwalking. All you need is a field guide to Australian birds and a pair of binoculars, indeed you do not even need these if all you want to do is sit and watch each bird as you come across them. Getting to know the different species' calls and habits makes you appreciate them much more, however, and the more you know about each species the more interesting your birdwatching becomes.

So you decide you want to do some birdwatching, you've got your Field Guide and binoculars, where do you go from there? Just look out your window! The Escarpment is to the west, the coastline to the east, either has plenty of potential for birdwatching. The Illawarra Lake is a major wet-land habitat, and the Escarpment is an important rainforest habitat for many species.

How to go about identifying each species is the next problem. Narrowing the search down from 650 species to a smaller group is the first step. Some books divide the species up into habitats (e.g. Cahley's 'What Bird is That'), or into Passerine and Non-Passerine (e.g. Slater's two volumes). Using such divisions can be your first step. After looking at the guides a few times Passerines and Non-Passerines soon become easy to recognise.

The following tips may help in identifying individuals you come across. Take note of the habitat it is in (e.g. forest or heath), where it is (e.g. in the canopy or on the ground), and what it is doing (e.g. scratching the leaf litter or catching insects on the wing). Note the size of the bird, not in absolute terms, which is difficult, but in relative terms. That is in relation to a known species, e.g., a bit bigger than a sparrow or smaller than a kookaburra). The colour of the bird is probably what stands out the most, at least in many species. Some groups of species are very similar, with only slight differences between them, e.g. the thornbills. Other parts of the bird's anatomy which should be noted are the bill and the feet. These can tell much about the birds life style and hence a good lead to their identification. The feet of the tree-creepers are quite different from those of the butcher-bird, as are their bills, both are indicative of the feeding habits and life-styles of each species.

Many species can quickly be put into a category even if never seen before. Parrots can immediately be recognised as such and honey-eaters are vaguely similar once you can identify a few, pigeons are another group which can be recognised, and so on.

If you've always wanted to go birdwatching or have never entertained the idea, I hope that this article will inspire you to get out and get watching. I'm sure you will gain much pleasure and piece of mind while doing so.

Kevin Mills

References: Cahley, N. 'What Bird is That', A & R 1974
(Revised and Enlarged Edition)
Slater, P. 'A Field Guide to Australian Birds',
Two Volumes, Rigby, 1974.

TRIP REPORT - ETTREMA WILDERNESS

Map: None
Date: 19th-20th July 1979
Activity: Bushwalking
Party: Kevin Mills, Jim Sligar

This trip was the third in a series of Mills/Sligar Ettrema Wilderness Exploratory Bushwalks. The two other walks have appeared in previous newsletters.

On the way passing through Kiama we were fortunate enough to witness the result of a meeting between a truck with a high hay load and a railway underpass. This nearly achieved the rating of a previous trip, of a seeing a fully grown goat (complete with horns) in the back of an Austin Morris passing through Dapto.

We reached the turnoff to Yarramunmun Track about 10.00 pm. A suitable campsite was found a short way along the track, where we made a hasty retirement (after a nip of port) due to the biting wind.

Saturday dawned a beautiful day and we were soon away along the track to our starting point. It was during this transit stage that we made the first of many mistakes, missing the entrances to two side roads, whose whereabouts were to be critical at a later stage of the trip.

We arrived at our departure point and bushbashed across to cliffline, not crossing some creeks that the map showed. At the cliffline we spent some time trying to identify the geological features, that the map showed and supposedly we should be looking at. After about 15 minutes had elapsed it suddenly dawned on us we were in wrong location, geological features that we could see could not be found anywhere on the map that we had (Sassafras 1:25000). We had driven too far north along the road. So we bushbashed back to the track, loaded the car up amidst a few laughs and drove south to our second departure point. This had to be the right one, contours and turnoffs fitted perfectly with our map.

Packs were shouldered for the second time and we were again bushbashing across to the cliffline. Here we could see across supposedly Boolijah Creek to the other cliffline and beyond to Ettrema Hill. At the cliffline we found a spectacular 100' chasm formed by part of the cliff separating from the cliff face. A pass was found through the cliffs and was appropriately named "Chasm Pass", then it was an easy bushwalk to the creek. This we followed downstream with many consultations of the map. At last we seemed to be in the right place. The creek dropped through a secondary cliffline, again the map did not show this feature, but we overlooked that, convinced we were on the right creek.

We then came across a major creek junction, everything was going to plan, then we went up the ridge between the two creeks, passing through a secondary cliffline on the way another map consultation and we began to realise that things were not as they should have been. Our secondary cliffline did not exist, and the appearance of the surrounding country should have been vastly different. It was going onto 3 o'clock and we were having doubts at exactly where we were. What was the name of the creek that we had followed downstream for most of the day? There was not much we could do but to push onward up the ridge, to get a better view of the surrounding country. From the top of a small hill (non-existent on our map), our earlier suspicions were confirmed, that we indeed had been walking on the wrong map all day. We could see across to Morley's Saddle, Fletcher's Crown, and Ettrema Hill, all distinctive landmarks of the region. Looking down the other side of the hill we could see the clearings along Danjera Creek, downstream from where we should have been.

We had restarted the walk still too far along the track and subsequently had walked into the wrong creek, which was found at a later date to be Hell Hole Creek. After the laughs of disbelief at the number of mistakes we had made, we made our way down into Hell Hole Creek to make camp for the night.

Next morning we retraced our tracks up the creek and through "Chasm Pass", exploring the chasm on the way. Then it was back to the car. We drove further south along the track to find our original starting point. After a short walk we eventually reached the cliffs of Boolijah Creek, and the camp could at last verify our position. A pass was found through the cliffs to be used at a later date when we will do our original trip.

From our experience we recommend that you carry a few extra maps of the surrounding country and that the car speedo is in working order so as to accurately gauge distances travelled when looking for turnoffs. Overall an interesting and enjoyable trip.

Jim Sligar.