

GUNDUNGURA



S.U.R.C.

front cover (1970)

RECORDS OF SURC

(Sydney University Rover Crew)

scan (2017) for circulation
in public domain
(as digital file)
in order to meet continuing interest
expressed by bushwalkers and climbers

GUNDUNGURA

THE GUIDE

- revised 1970 version of booklet
- based on bushwalking sketch map of Kowmung Country
first drawn 1961 (Geoff Ford compiler),
- based on booklet first prepared 1965
(Athol Abrahams compiler)

with new Foreword by the originator
of the 1960s Gundungura Project
(Geoff Ford, 2017)

(surviving compilation of 1965 version is being archived, 2017)

the 1970 publication of only 1,000 copies sold out quickly
but was not reprinted and soon became unavailable . . .

this scan is from a black & white photocopy
arranged by Rick Jamieson ('Big Rick')
after Geoff returned to Sydney in 1990s

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(original was double sided)

RECORDS OF SURC

Foreword (2017) by Dr Geoff Ford
for scan of
GUNDUNGURA GUIDE BOOKLET
published 1970
as First Edition

In my 1996 story about the Genesis of the SURC Gundungura Project,
Recollections of the 'Sixties in 'NinetySix:
"The Whys Of The Kowmung Country and Gundungura", ➡

published by Dave Noble (editor) in the SUBW book 'Press On Regardless', I wrote
about **The Booklet** which I had conceived:

members carrying on did a mighty job producing such a useful publication. (But that's another story!) It has provided background for other articles. I had planned it to be a comprehensive pocket book to be carried in the field. It was to include a glossary explaining every place name. And information about animals and plants as well as archaeology and minerals. We collected together lots of historical and scientific information in the Uni Rover den. Its concept was modelled on "Snowy Mountain Studies", edited by Charles Warner. That was an outcome of a committee on which I was an activities adviser, convened by Paddy Pallin for a Senior Scout Venture near Mt Kosciusko. (But that's another story too!)

Paddy (F.A.) Pallin - an old Scout himself - was our mentor. He would publish and distribute our map and our booklet. Many SURC members had joint membership with other student outdoor clubs, sharing activities with uni Bushwalkers, Rockclimbers, and Speleos.

Rick Jamieson had followed me as leader. After I'd left Sydney at the end of 1961 to live in Tasmania, Rick continued to work with another team of students led by Athol Abrahams. In that period a new outdoor activity, canyoneering, was taking off. From Athol's own interest in rockclimbing his team was to expand my mountaineering concepts to provide a guide for this as well as guide to access routes. By 1965, the first edition was ready, and Athol wrote a Preface. At this time of the 1960s, it was rare for somebody to do a Ph.D. - experiences of SURC members suggest that engaging in outdoor activities like Mountain Climbing may have been advantageous! When Rick and Athol curtailed their outdoor activities having become postgraduate research students, other undergraduate students took over, now led by Greg Middleton. Greg's personal interest was speleology. Without identifying himself, he consulted Myles Dunphy. Consequently



the then current students determined to self-publish rather than have Paddy publish, so in 1966 Paddy returned SURC photos he had for use. Cost restraints now reduced what could be included and how many could be printed. A 1970 Postscript to the 1965 Preface was added for the review of the original. (In Paddy's shop the guide sold out. Although Paddy had helped with its funding, he could not republish the guide.) Completing their Ph.D.s, Rick & Athol also left Sydney, to live overseas.

In addition to changes to the booklet, new editions of the map were re-organised too, without appreciation of the efforts taken by all those SURC members earlier involved.

(Errors ensued.†)

Underground at the Totem Poles, photo from SURC records

The 1970 publication of the booklet has been the only edition published.

Athol's 1965 longer version (with editorial markings) was retained by Greg, eventually making its way back to the SURC.

When the 1970 version sold out, it was not reprinted.

This 2017 scan is taken from a photocopy made when I returned to Sydney.

SURC members conducted the Gundungura project as an undergraduate student club of Sydney University students' Union, SUU, with assistance from other members of the outdoor clubs. In an online bushwalking forum in 2013 the question of copyright was raised concerning obtaining access. The SURC had collapsed. Copyright for student club activities is not sought by the University or by the Student Union.

With the project initially to be identified with Yerranderie in relation to the 1800s map of the Yerranderie Gold Fields, the word *Gundungura* is my own presentation. [As a Research Scholar, I have examined History of Blue Mountains Aboriginal people.] As explained in my 1996 story, *Gundungura* represented the sound for the name of the Aboriginal Tribal group who had occupied the locality. McCarthy had presented the term as *Gandangara* using English characters. It is now spelt with 'r r': *Gundungurra* ! [use single 'r' for online searches]

This was a Scouting Service, in the tradition first set by SURC in 1933 when Crew student members built the "*Coolong*" hut near Yerranderie for biological 'Experiment Station' - **setting the seed in the Kowmung Country!**

There were more than forty contributors in the 1960s. On behalf of the myriad of personnel involved in the Gundungura Project, as the originator I claim copyright for publications of the project, which is hereby renounced!

I'd like (2017) copies of my map and the guide available freely in the public domain. (I include my 1961 Nelly's Glen map publ by Paddy.) It was the intention that Gundungura Project material be readily shared, shining light on the awesomeness of the Kowmung Country. In those days the wilderness was vast and the human population small.



Material is always to be attributed to the Sydney University Rover Crew
(as is the Trail).

† for example, The Map was not "drawn up in the summer of 1961-62" - that was a claim by 72yo Myles Dunphy who wrote to bushwalking clubs that we'd done no field work and I'd only copied government provisional map sheets (before 1963 when he'd used them!), whereas I'd been locked away in the basement of the Lands Dept with restricted military aerial photographs while I did camera lucida sketches with 3D images. The drawing (see 1996 story) was completed by October 1961 when I had had to start studying for my final year exams! (SURC field sketches were more accurate than those by Dunphy. His own trips had been restricted since 1934 after a health scare.)

Batshit Camp was never "Bats Camp" as given in 1970 - refer explanation in my 1996 story. It was on Crown Land of the public Stock Route outside the gate where the locals had taken their rough bulldozed track into 'Tomat Creek' Station. Later, the government put in a tourist road.

There had not been any anticipation of a gate being placed at Mt. Werong to block the Stock Route when we marked the route of The Uni Rover Trail for speleos to re-access Colong Caves. So, the SURC had no intention of making a track - that was done later by the National Parks service. The point where "one can obtain an excellent view of Christys Creek and the Kowmung Gorge" (p.34, 1970 Guide) was the Revelation Rock as Athol's 1965 Guide had correctly related.

⇒ Re-presentation of 1996 story online at URL (2017):

<https://www.subw.org.au/archives/press-on-regardless/the-whys-of-the-kowmung-country-and-gundungura/>

GUNDUNGURA

A GUIDE TO THE GREATER SOUTHERN BLUE MOUNTAINS AND THE MAJOR PART OF
THE KANANGRA BOYD NATIONAL PARK, N.S.W.

A description of walking routes, canyons, caves and rock climbs,
with notes on History, Geology, Flora, Fauna and Anthropology - to be
used in conjunction with the Gundungura Bushwalking (Sketch) Map of the
Greater Southern Blue Mountains.

First Edition, 1970

Compiled and published by the Sydney University Rover Crew,
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PREFACE

With an exploratory walk by members of the Crew in 1957, interest was aroused in the Gundungura area. Further walks revealed the inadequacy of existing published maps, in some cases there being nothing but obsolete parish maps. This prompted the Crew, under the direction of Geoff Ford, to draw the first Gundungura Map. Gundungura I was based on tracings from aerial photographs, in conjunction with many field trips, and was drawn up in the summer of 1961-62.

In 1963 it was decided that a pamphlet should be published, making available to the bushwalker that information and experience gained by the Crew during its excursions in the area. Over the succeeding years the concept of a pamphlet has grown to its present dimensions.

This book, like any book of its type, is never complete and never will be. An attempt has been made to record information known to the Crew at the time. The guide is based on first-hand exploratory trips. The descriptions are quite detailed as it was felt that too many guide books suffer from lack of it. Notes on geology, wildlife, history and general points of interest have been included to give a broader background and better appreciation of the described route.

Normal conventions are complied with, although 'canyon' in the Kanangra area is used in a very broad sense to include sets of waterfalls. While following watercourses, particularly in canyons, 'right' and 'left' are taken to mean while facing downstream. In the description of the climbs on Square Rock they are taken to mean while facing the cliff.

The grade of the walks would probably be comparable to 'medium grade' as it appears in Sydney bushwalking clubs' programmes, and times have been given accordingly, unless otherwise mentioned. The Kanangra Canyons, Wheengee Whungee Creek and Christys Creek are exceptions.

NAMES

The names of geographical features used in this book and on the Gundungura Map, Third Edition, are of three types:

- 1) Geographical Names gazetted by the Geographical Names Board of N.S.W. These have been used for all features to which Geographical Names have been assigned. In a few cases, where common usage dictates, alternative names are given in brackets.
- 2) Names recorded by Myles Dunphy. These have been used, to the best of our knowledge only for features to which Geographical Names have not been assigned.
- 3) Names given by the Crew. These were much more numerous on the early editions of the Gundungura Map but have now been reduced to a minimum.

Athol Abrahams, 1965.

with others
- Rick Jamieson

POSTSCRIPT, 1970

Since 1963 'Gundungura' has lead a checkered career. By 1966 it was ready for publication but its bulk exceeded our resources. Re-writing and pruning ensued but again publication problems proved insurmountable. But now finally it is in print.

We do not feel it has suffered with the passage of time - a wilderness does not naturally change rapidly. Much of Gundungura has been included in the Kanangra-Boyd National Park; it is to be hoped more will be. The most serious development has been the worsening situation at Church Creek - Mount Armour where the Government has resolved, against strong public opposition, to allow a most destructive form of mining to take place. The proposal to plant the area from the top of the Oberon Hill (above Jenolan Caves) to a line just north of the Boyd River to pine also poses a threat to the 'naturalness' of the Park. Every effort must be made to prevent these destructive intrusions for if they proceed the wilderness of Gundungura will be lost forever.

Regrettably, limitations on space have forced us to omit more detailed information on Anthropology, Flora, Fauna and Geology - though much of this has been woven into the guide proper. If this Guide is as well received as the Gundungura Map has been, we shall feel that the effort has been worthwhile and, more importantly, further, enlarged editions may be possible. Naturally, we would be interested in any comments or criticisms from users of this Guide and any additional information which might help to improve future editions.

P.G., D.W. & G.J.M.
Sydney University 1970.

Peter Gissing
Dennis Wood
Greg Middleton
with others:
e.g. - Tim Herborn
-

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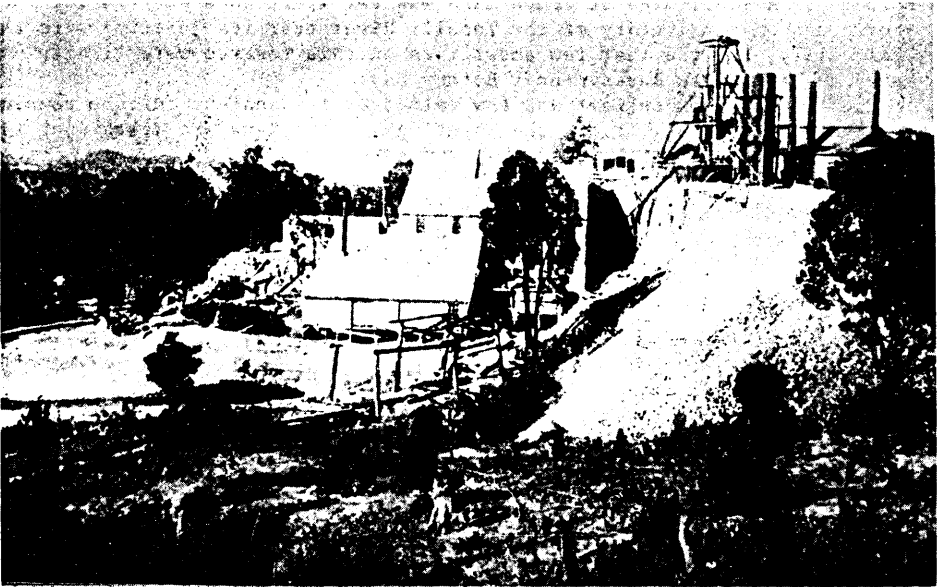
Mitchell Library, the Sydney University Departments of Geology, Geography and Biology, The University of N.S.W., Mr. Neville Lang, Mr. Paddy Pallin and Messrs. Ralph and Morris Gardner.

Most of the text was written by Athol Abrahams with assistance in smaller ways by many others notably Doug Richardson, John Pickard, and Greg Middleton.

Photographs are acknowledged individually, but in particular, thanks are due to Mr. Henry Gold, Mr. David Eden and Mr. D. Hilyard.

Cover Photograph: 'Gundungura' from Kanangra.
- Mr. Henry Gold.

HISTORY



Silver Peak Mine, Yerranderie, at the turn of the Century.

- Mitchell Library

HISTORY

ABORIGINES

The aborigines of the Gundungura Tribe were the first men to wander through the Southern Blue Mountains, from Katoomba through the Burragor- and to as far south as Berrima and Goulburn.

Due to its isolation and inaccessibility, the Gundungura area was late in being settled and the aborigines lived well off this land where there was abundant game - kangaroos, wallabies, possums, goannas, snakes, pigeons and ducks; fish - eels, blackfish, mullet and perch; bushfruit and yams.

With intensification of white settlement, the Gundungura Tribe dwindled. Many left to join the larger tribes in Queensland, some who remained integrated with the settlers and became proficient stockmen, shearers and horsemen. A small area of Crown Land was set apart as a Reserve for Aborigines on a tributary of the Tonalli River near its junction with the Wollondilly, but the last few aborigines on this reserve were finally moved to La Perouse Reserve near Botany Bay.

The tribe is now extinct and few relics of its ancient culture remain. Perhaps the most notable are the paintings on the Kanangra Walls, not far around from Gordon Smith Pass.

Since the aborigines had no written language, there has been little protection of the true pronunciation of their native names. Many names have consequently been altered from the short, soft vowel sounds of the aboriginal to the harsh, drawling speech of the white man and, also, many of the meanings have been lost.

BARRALLIER

The first white man to see the Gundungura area was Ensign Francis Barrallier of the N.S.W. Corps, a Frenchman by birth and aide-de-camp to Governor King. Barrallier was one of the first to make an attempt at finding a crossing of the Blue Mountains, then known as the 'Carmarthen Hills', as named by Admiral Arthur Phillip in 1788.

Barrallier left Parramatta in 1802 with a troop of soldiers and, recruiting natives as he went, set up a depot at the Nattai from which he made three journeys. The longest of Barrallier's trips occupied about 10 days, but the exact route which he took has perplexed historians for years.

The difficulties arising in interpretation are due directly to failings in Barrallier's log, particularly his failure to note landmarks accurately and describe his route fully. However, his cartographic ability has been substantiated by his previous work and his map of his journey may be treated as being accurate.

The most notable interpretation was by the botanist, R. H. Cabbage, in 1910, but since then a greater knowledge of this part of the Blue Mountains has prompted a further interpretation by R. Else-Mitchell, who makes a very strong case, of which there can be little doubt. Contrary to

Cabbage's analysis, Mitchell showed conclusively that Barrallier, following the Wollondilly upstream from the Nattai, left the river before its junction with the Tonalli and, on his first journey, climbed Tonalli Mountain before returning to his Nattai depot.

He undertook his second journey in November, 1802. Retracing his steps, he continued up the Tonalli Valley where he was forced, by the rough nature of the terrain (Chinaman Bluffs) to cross the river, and he passed close to the present site of Yerranderie. From near this point Barrallier took compass bearings on three prominent openings through a chain of mountains before continuing his way westwards. Passing through the middle of these three gaps, he camped for the night by a swamp, just beyond. Checking these sightings on the gaps has left little doubt that these openings were the Kowmung Gap, Byrnes Gap and Green Wattle Gap.

Barrallier writes that after taking these sightings, he travelled over granite country and crossed a rapid stream which impressed him "by reason of the blue and red granite stones in its bed". This description matches the Tonalli River, which he crossed a second time unsuspectingly, where it flows over a red porphyritic intrusion just upstream from Yerranderie. Barrallier describes the middle of the three gaps through which he passed as "half a mile in width with perpendicular sides and having been formed by a perpendicular cut in the mountain, the profiles of which north and south were of an immense height and presented to the eye a majestic aspect". Such a description is admirably applicable to Byrnes Gap.

A short distance from Byrnes Gap is a series of swamps (The Football Ground) with an occasional lagoon - the headwaters of Butchers Creek - and one of these is probably "the reedy lagoon" by which Barrallier says he camped the night. The following day Barrallier's map indicates that he passed Kowmung Mountain and eventually took a route comparable to the 'Inglis Selection Track' today, down Church Hill into Church Creek, where he mentions the limestone bluffs, before reaching the Kowmung an hour before sunset. That night he camped at Christys Creek.

The next day he made his way up Christys Creek where he experienced many hardships with his troops and horses and was finally turned back by what are known today as Barralliers Falls. Kanangra Walls were but four miles distant, from which his goal, the Western Plains, were only a day's march.

The tops about the upper reaches of Christys Creek, today fittingly bear the names of the aboriginal members of Barrallier's party: Gogy, Wallarra, Bungin, Bulgin, Le Tonsure and Wooglemai. Goondel was the Chief of the Gundungura Tribe at the time and could be said to be the "King of the Mountains" whom Barrallier was sent to meet, as a pretence, while he looked for a route west. Barrallier and Goondel did meet, Goondel at the time being accompanied by another aborigine by the name of Mootik. Had relations been more cordial, Mootik, who knew the route to the Western Plains, would probably have guided Barrallier to success.

Barrallier began a third journey up the Wollondilly but, realising its futility, turned back. Soon afterwards he returned to England. In 1807

Sir Joseph Banks set about putting names to the features described by Barrallier, and so named the Tonalli River.

EXPLORATION AND EARLY PASTORAL SETTLEMENT

It was only 20 years after Barrallier that George Pearce entered the Burratorang Valley by way of Brimstone Creek and squatted on the lower reaches of the Coxs River. He was not the first to settle here; two cattle-duffers, Butcher and Bullock, had been operating for some time from a large cave at the junction of Butchers Creek and the Coxs. They would steal cattle from Bathurst and drive them down the Coxs, thence through Colong and Taralga, for sale at Goulburn.

In June 1827, Samuel Blackman applied for permission to rent 2,560 acres of land about ten miles to the north-west of the Wollondilly River at a place known by the native name of 'Cullong'. Samuel Blackman was the first settler in the vicinity of Mt. Colong and he and his descendants occupied the land for many years afterwards.

In 1833 Surveyor White was instructed to commence a survey of the country between the Wollondilly and the Great Dividing Range. A month later he reported having mapped the range from 'Collong' to the Great Dividing Range (at Mt. Werong) and set about completing the trace of the country between 'Mount Collong' and the Tonalli Range. This he found no easy task; the peaks he found inaccessible and the scrub so thick that he was forced to set fire to it. He reports: "What work I have done, and what remains to be done, is divided by an inaccessible ravine, the stream of which is called by the natives the Kowmung".

Edward Lammas Moore was the first of the growing number of graziers in the Burratorang to take up a title deed to land in the Colong district. In 1867 and 1879, under the provisions of the Volunteer Force Regulation Act of 1867, he was given free grants of 49 and 50 acres, respectively, where Colong Station is today. In the following decade he purchased several more small portions scattered throughout the district.

In 1889, two of his sons, John and Fredrick Moore and a later trustee of his estate, William Inglis, began to acquire a large number of holdings, invariably by 'conditional sale', as provided under the Crown Lands Act of 1884.

During the 1890's and early 1900's many other pioneer pastoralists and their families purchased land in the area. These early settlers in Gundungura are remembered today in the many features which bear their names. The Quigg Family, Thomas Donohoe and H.C. Manning acquired large areas east of Yerranderie; Michael Byrne and William Meier, in the Colong Valley; Thomas Chiddy held 1,200 acres near Barrallier and 34 acres on the Tonalli River, and Hubert Carlon purchased land at the Murruin Creek - Wollondilly River junction and in The Gulf; whereas William Cosgrove, A.R.N. Grimshaw and Jeremiah F. O'Leary held the title deeds to the Bindook area.

Meanwhile, the Gundungura area was also being opened up from the north-west. Seymour (1864) and Maxwell (1868) were probably the first white

men to traverse Kanangra Tops, then called 'Kowmung Walls'. The Kowmung Valley was immediately recognised by these early pastoralists as being better watered and providing more reliable feed than was to be found in the neighbouring districts of Oberon, Megalong and Burragorang. Soon bridle trails converged on it, over Kanangra Tops and Gangerang Range, along Scotts Main Range, through Byrnes Gap and down Lannigans Creek.

Many of these early pastoralists in these adjacent areas were linked by their families and names such as Maxwell, O'Reilly, Carlon, Byrne and Hughes were very widespread. Thus it does not appear strange that in 1891 a dancefloor was constructed in the largest cave at Kanangra and for many years, at irregular intervals, Saturday night socials were held - the pastoralists and their families converging along the bridle trails on horseback.

James Whalan, for his efforts in persuading and aiding in the capture of the bushranger, McKeown, and his simultaneous discovery of Jenolan Caves in 1838, was given a free land grant at Budthingaroo. With the discovery of the 'Kowmung Walls', his nephew, Charles Whalan took a great interest in publicising and attracting visitors to his new 'Tourist Resort' as it was proclaimed in 1891, and took it upon himself to cut a track to the walls from Jenolan. In addition, William Inglis set about building a guesthouse about half a mile from the walls. However, it was never completed, owing to the lack of roofing materials - all that remains today are the 'Clay House Ruins'.

LATER PASTURAL SETTLEMENT (POST 1930)

During the depression years of the 1930's local industry was hit by low prices and rabbits and the banks held mortgages on virtually the whole area. In 1936 William Meier began purchasing land throughout the Colong Valley and his 'Big Hill Station' was the largest in the area, totalling over 3,000 acres at his death in 1946.

William Lang took up 1,575 acres at Bindook and in the Gulf in 1934. In 1941 ownership passed to his son, Neville, who has continued to add to the property. Today it has grown to 8,771 acres and is composed of three separate stations: 'Bindook' 4,500 acres, 'Colong' 1,800 and 'Bullnigang' 2,471. Until Neville Lang cut a road over Blackall Rocks in 1941, Bindook Station had been linked to civilisation only by bridle trails to Yerranderie, Mount Werong, Taralga and Barrallier.

The Gardner Brothers purchased their 'Tomat Creek' Station in 1943-4. Immediately after the war, lumbering emerged as a very profitable enterprise and was carried on throughout Gundungura. The Gardner Bros. constructed a mill at Gumbedding Swamp, which has since been burnt down. Alfred Eilbeck, who was employed in the mill, purchased 114 acres at the base of Little Rick in 1950 and continued to cut timber on a small scale. Cleary, however, following a fire in 1948, built a road into the Waterfall Creek country and cut out 132,000 superfeet of cedar, ash and sassafras before the authorities could clarify the position.

With the construction of Warragamba Dam, the Water Board began evict-

ion proceedings in 1954. Those tenants within two miles of the future lake were compelled to leave; while others within the Gundungura Area could remain, if they so decided, but had to forfeit right of access across the Burragorang Valley. The Gardner Brothers and Lang chose to stay and with the submergence of the Wollondilly Bridge in 1960, they were forced to construct 16 miles of road along the Murruin Range to Mt. Werong. Sydney is now 180 miles away, as opposed to 89 miles across through Burragorang, while the cost of transporting a bale of wool to Sydney market rose from 20/- to 56/-.

Meanwhile the decision of the Dept. of Civil Aviation to construct a beacon on Nyanga Mountain has meant that a pre-requisite 'all season' road has been graded along the Murruin Range. Access by this route is now reliable during the winter months, whereas in the past, any snow or heavy rain would make the road virtually impassable across The Big Plain and beyond.

MINING

Following the silver discoveries in 1871 and the initiation of major mining operations at Yerranderie in 1897, gold was discovered in small quantities in the major streams throughout Gundungura and several centres emerged following the declaration of the 'Yerranderie Gold Field' in 1909. One of these was Mt. Werong where a small settlement sprang up. Today a rusted, corrugated iron shack and burnt-out store are all that remain.

However, most panning was done in Lanningans Creek and in the Kowmung as far downstream as Christys Creek, and old huts, tents and shallow shafts were a common sight along its banks during the depression. Small quantities of gold were won by individuals who continued to work the Cedar Creek field into the early 1940's.

In 1956 a road was constructed up the Tonalli Valley, through Kowmung Gap and along Armours Ridge. Washaways, associated with the November 1961 floods, caused the road to be re-routed through Colong Swamp. Between 1956 and 1968, four mining leases were granted in the Colong Caves Reserve, in the vicinity of Church Creek and Mt. Armour. These originally totalled about 120 acres but in October 1968 the State Government announced its intention to increase this to 580 acres, making all the limestone on the southern side of Church Creek available to the cement company. Every effort is being made by conservationists to prevent this mining.

In August 1965 the 'Limestone Road' to Armours Ridge was again re-routed, to follow the 1956 road up the Tonalli Valley, but now passing through Tonalli Gap. It is believed the cement company plans to transport crushed limestone across country to its Maldon plant by slurry. This operation would pose a threat to the Warragamba Catchment, quite apart from its disastrous affect on the immediate area, but perhaps even more serious from the point of view of the catchment is the proposal to recommence silver mining operations at Yerranderie. This could

release dangerous amounts of arsenopyrite which would be carried into Lake Burratorang.

CONCLUSION

Under the protection of the Water Board, Gundungura has been reverting gradually to its primitive condition and today herds of wallabies may be seen grazing in the Burratorang just as they did in the time of the Gundungura Tribe. The forest, unfortunately, is still blackened periodically by fire; as yet, fire roads have done little but scar the landscape beyond repair. Nevertheless, some essence of a true 'wilderness area' is returning, although it may be many decades before anything like a true ecological balance is restored.

There is no doubt of the growing attraction of Gundungura for the bushwalker and fellow caver and canyoner, as well as those with scientific interests. The inclusion of most of this area in the Kanangra-Boyd National Park is a step in the right direction, and amounts to a recognition by the Government of the area's special qualities, but the exclusion of large areas for the Konangaroo State Forest and limestone mining at Mt. Armour could have the effect of negating the value of the Park as a recreation and conservation area.

If the destructive enterprises of civilisation can be prohibited in this area and entry continues to be controlled, we may look forward to a viable sanctuary where the beauties of the Australian bushland may be preserved for the future.



The Wonga, formerly Tonalli Mine - Yerranderie Peak
on the left. - Mitchell Library

KANANGRA

CANYONS



Western end of Kanangra Grand Gorge, Kanangra Falls on Kanangra Creek (top centre) and four of the Kalang Falls (Kanangra Brook) are evident in this view from Maxwell Top. The vertical interval shown here exceeds 2000 feet.

- John Clark.

KALANG FALLS

Equipment: 2 ropes, 1 camera

Time: 1 day

Kalang Falls, totalling some 1,500 ft. offers the canyoner the best set of abseils in the Blue Mountains: nine spectacular falls into the Kanangra Gorge.

From the parking area at Kanangra Walls, walk along the road towards Echo Head for 50 yards before climbing down a small rocky spur into Kanangra Brook. One hundred yards downstream brings you to the first fall, which presents a 100 ft. abseil down a free face from an obvious tree on the right hand side of the falls.

Thirty yards to the next fall where it is safer to do the 140 ft. descent in two stages - the first belayed from a bush 50 ft. along a ledge on the right hand side, while the second abseil, from a large dead tree immediately below, ends on a narrow ledge of slippery quartzite just above the pool.

A bit of rock scrambling and through some scrub for 30 yds. brings you to a tree to the left of, and 30 ft. below the top of the falls, from which the third abseil is belayed.

From the tree there is an excellent view of the two falls which you have just descended, while Kanangra Walls appearing around a rocky promontory presents a radiant sight in the morning sun.

The abseil is partly overhung and a tree immediately underneath can always be relied upon to provide a bit of entertainment.

The fourth, a 160 ft. fall, follows immediately on the third and offers two possible descents. The first from the lower of two trees at the bottom of the last abseil. Keep to the right (facing out) going down right beside the fall, so that you land on several ledges from which it is necessary to climb down the last 30 ft. to the base of the falls. The alternative route lies 20yards. through scrub and vines to the left, entailing a hand over hand descent 40 ft. down a small spur to a suitable tree which provides an excellent belay for a 110 ft. abseil down the gully it overlooks.

The fifth fall is a 60 ft. cascade, dashing down a narrow chute before a small fall into the plunge pool.

The belay point of the 40 ft. abseil is reached 20 yds. through thick scrub to the right of the falls, down a short gully and thence to the right again to a small tree on the rock ledge.

At the base of this fall, the rather dull quartzite is replaced by red Devonian siltstone which adds more colour to the spectacular falls.

The sixth abseil is from any number of trees to the right of the next fall and lies over a red coloured face on which wild orchids have established themselves in every nook and cranny. However, if desired, the abseil may be easily by-passed down a gully 30 yds. to the right.

The seventh fall is negotiated on the left hand side with a 100 ft. abseil down a wet and slippery ramp which is angled in towards the beckoning falls tumbling over the red rock to boil in the pool filling

a natural basin below. Considerable care is warranted, as a sudden drenching, particularly in winter, in these super cooled waters can be very unpleasant.

The eighth and biggest of the Kalang Falls totals some 240 ft. in one leap, presenting quite an amazing sight against the towering cliffs.

A large ledge fortuitously placed halfway down is reached from a small tree situated just to the left of the falls. But take care that your rope does not jam when trying to retrieve it. A 100 ft. scrubby abseil from a bush right where you land on the ledge takes you to the boulder strewn base of the fall.

A very small bush provides a belay point for the tenth and final abseil down the last of the falls. The bush is on a ledge six feet above the tops of the falls and 50 yds. through some trees on the left side.

This bush may be a bit too small to be safe and it is probably better to "pike out" down the spur to the left which provides a good rock scramble to the Brook's junction with Kanangra Creek.

Fifty yards downstream is Murdering Gully, which provides the route back to the Tops. The ascent can be made straight up the gully itself, being wary of cliffs on the right hand side, or, starting 40 yds. beyond, a small cairn and watercourse mark the main route. This lies up the small spurs keeping to the left of the gully. Sidle right as one comes across the sets of cliffs and eventually cross the landslide beyond which the going is through bracken to the Defile.

KANANGRA CREEK

Equipment: 2 x 120 ropes (at least),
1 belay sling.

Time: 1 day

Kanangra Creek falls and cascades some 2,000 ft. into the head of Kanangra Gorge. This descent typifies the grandness of scale of the Kanangra Canyons which is unsurpassed anywhere in the Blue Mountains.

Leave the Kanangra road at the side of the old clay ruins half a mile before Kanangra Walls. These ruins are the remains of a mud house only partly built by William Inglis who intended to establish a guesthouse in the Kanangra District. It was never completed due to the lack of roofing material.

Cross Kanangra Brook and head north over the windswept Kittani Top and cross a shallow gully to the promontory that overlooks the giant Kanangra Gorge.

The route into Kanangra Gorge lies first down the small gully to your right (for about 100 ft.) till it becomes too steep to descend any further. Climb back onto the spur to your left and continue down over screes and small drops to within 150 ft. of the bottom. Here a 120 ft. hand over hand is done from an obvious tree down a gully before scrambling the last 30 ft. to the bed of the creek immediately above the second set of falls.

Three routes now lie open. (1) The first, a descent, of the falls themselves by 2 x 4 rope abseils belaying initially to a tree high up on the slope to the right. However, the 30 ft. scramble at the bottom of the second abseil is over slippery quartzite. There has already been one casualty. (2) The alternative and better routes lie over a small grassy divide to the left and down a well worn track used to bring out Dick Donaghey in the Kanangra rescue of 1961. Thirty yards and the track brings you onto a large ledge, enclosed on three sides by cliffs but the fourth offering a spectacular view of the Kanangra Gorge falling away before you with Kanangra Walls above.

A small tributary trickles onto the ledge and falls 200 ft. to the main creek flowing under the boulder strewn floor of the canyon below.

The belay is either of two trees 60 ft. above, five ropes will reach the bottom and provide a really first class abseil, remembering to join the ropes by eye splices and to use large carabiners to fit over the knots.

(3) The third route rules out the need for any ropes bar that for a 10 ft. hand over hand. From the ledge from which the abseil in the second route begins, traverse left over an exposed ledge. Jamming the rope between two rocks a 10 ft. hand over hand is done, swinging into a little slot to reach the greenery on a large sloping ledge from which with some care one is able to scramble to the bottom. The route was initially used by the rescue party in 1961. However, care is necessary and it should only be attempted by an experienced party.

It is 100 yds. to the next abseil 150 ft. down a free face from either of two trees on the right hand side of the impressive fall. If only two ropes are used the abseil ends on a ledge 30 ft. above the pool from which there is a climb off the ledge.

Retrieving the rope is much easier if the rope is run through a sling attached to the belay tree.

The last fall is only small and is sidled on the left hand side through a bit of scrub.

A few hundred yards boulder hopping to Kalang Falls, and 50 yds. beyond, Murdering Gully provides the route to the Tops (described under Kalang Falls).

DANAE BROOK

Equipment: 2 ropes (120 ft.)
4 belay slings.

Time: 1 day

Danae Brook combines grandeur with spectacularity to produce a magnificent canyon - probably the best in the Blue Mountains.

Leaving the clay ruins on the Kanangra Road, make your way across the Tops, heading Kanangra Gorge, cross Kanangra Creek and ascend Big Misty through thick scrub and saplings and with careful navigation you can drop into Danae Brook right above the falls.

The water makes a truly impressive sight as it plunges into a narrow fissure to fall 1,400 ft. through the canyon before it opens out into an enormous walled rock chute beyond the prominent gendarme.

Scramble down 60 ft. on the left side of the first fall to the lowest of the two obvious trees and do a 110 ft. abseil into the crevasse down which the water disappears. For the second drop use a sling belay around a piece of wedged driftwood. This 110 ft. abseil, confined between the two walls, lies over two chock stones. The fissure is so narrow that if it were not so covered with moss, you could chimney it.

From the next stance, a second sling around a jammed tree trunk is the belay for the highlight of the trip - a 110 ft. free fall abseil straight down a waterfall.

Now traverse along the obvious ledge for 50 yds. past a cairn and choose a belay for a 70 ft. abseil to an obvious ledge below.

Continue the traverse 50 yds. through the trees to the Gendarme.

Scramble down the grassed slope on the side of the gendarme following the dip of the treacherous red rock and continue as far as you can toward the canyon floor. Choose any one of the abundant tree belays and abseil to the creek.

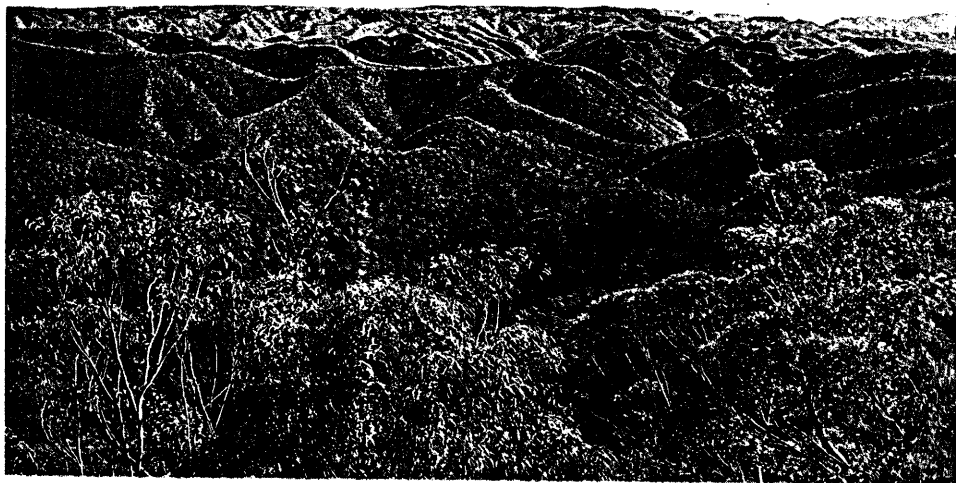
A 30 ft. hand over hand from a tree on the right hand side by-passes a small cascade. The final 90 ft. abseil in the canyon is belayed from two pitons on the left hand side of a very colourful fall. Below the fall a sheltered glen provides a camp site for any party that might wish to spend two days over the trip.

Beyond the glen the canyon opens out into a mighty chute, the floor of which is choked with house sized boulders made miniature by the immense cliffs that tower on either side. The scrambling descent is great fun. A small bottleneck - like rift at the bottom of the chute requires a short 30 ft. abseil before a rock hop to Kanangra Creek.

One may return to the Tops via Murdering Gully (described under Kalang Falls) or ascend the excellent buttress directly opposite Danae Brook to Kilpatrick Causeway. However, the most scenic alternative is via Thurat Spires. The ascent is but a scramble with an abseil required to descend from the first and biggest spire. This vantage point shows off Kanangra in all its magnificence from an uncommon and rewarding angle.

KOWMUNG

COUNTRY



The Kowmung River Valley and environs looking north from
Mt. Marrup.

- Mr. David Eden

GINGRA RANGE AND RIDGES

The Gingra Range has long been a route to Kanangra Walls. It was used by stockmen for 60 years as a bridle trail and to move cattle into the Kowmung. This practice has only ceased since the damming of the Warragamba and the bridle trail still remains, although none but bushwalkers make use of it.

KANANGRA TOPS

From the car park at Kanangra a track leads down to the camping caves in The Defile. The first of these caves has earned a name "The Dance-floor". The wooden platform there was built in 1891 by the community of Oberon as a dancefloor and regularly for several decades the pastoralists and their families would converge along bridle trails from Burragorang, Oberon and Megalong for a social at what was then called Kowmung Walls.

In the next cave pioneers of the Mountain Trails Club have built a drip-bowl to provide a water supply for the camper.

The two old iron ladders which used to give access to the Tops were replaced by a ramp in 1942. The track is followed northeast across the Tops from which there is a truly magnificent panorama. At Maxwell's Chair, where there is an inscribed plaque, take the track to the south past Maxwell Top (trig station). Passing the coal seam the track descends for a short way into typical scunge (secondary growth) and sidles around the eastern flank of cottage Rock.

BULLHEAD RIDGE - Cabbage Spire

Leave the Gingra Range at a small cairn 400 yds. past Cottage Rock. Walking along the top of Bullhead Ridge is quite easy, with little undergrowth to obscure the truncate dipping beds of the metamorphosed siltstone, shales and quartzite.

Half an hour's walking brings you to a saddle above which is Bullhead Mountain. This saddle is characterised by row upon row of dead saplings and trees laid out on the ground all seeming to lie across your path.

The climb onto Bullhead Mt. and the view is marred somewhat by the large bushes of mountain holly and other such scrub.

Cabbage Spire is well named, being surrounded by steep quartzite scree and grey cliffs.

From Cabbage Spire the descent to the Kowmung River takes the form of a series of steps. Except when climbing down the Spire itself it is imperative to keep to the centre of the ridge to avoid the cliffs that fall away into the Kowmung on one side and Arabanoo Creek Canyon on the other. Boots are advisable as this rather rough descent can be very hard on one's feet.

This route to the Kowmung at Christys Junction takes just over half a day.

ROOTS RIDGE

The bridle track along the Gingra Range is followed for a further two miles beyond Bullhead junction before a large anthill on the south side of the track, topped with a cairn, indicates Roots Ridge. Wally Roots, so the story goes, was leading a party of Sydney Bushwalkers in the Kowmung. Being somewhat vague as to his position, he confidently led his party up this ridge. Upon being questioned as to his position, with much flourish he pronounced the he was pioneering a new route out of the Kowmung to be called Roots Ridge.

Descending through some bracken, one leaves Gingra behind and a clear ridge is followed for one mile before the slope increases sharply and the scrub thickens slowing progress considerably till eventually you emerge on a razor back above Rainbow Bluff with the Kowmung at your feet.

The remaining 400 ft. is a pleasant grassy slope under tall iron barks, peppermints and casuarinas.

HUGHES RIDGE

The bridle trail is followed along Gingra a further mile past Roots Ridge to Second Top. Hughes Ridge provides the best access route to the Kowmung from the Gingra Range. It is named after a family who live in the Oberon district and used to drive cattle into the Kowmung for pasturage via Pfeiffer's trail and Kanangra Walls. On the banks of the Kowmung below the ridge the ruins of a former stockman's hut built by the family may be seen today, while in the large clearing just upstream on the opposing bank the remains of a corral are still visible.

For Hughes Ridge leave the Gingra Range as one begins the ascent out of the saddle just before Second Top. Here a conspicuous cairn marks a faint bridle track that sidles around the knob and onto Hughes Ridge. Once this track used to continue the length of the ridge but today traces of it are rarely to be seen. The ridge falls a total 2,000 ft. into the Kowmung - however, 1,200 ft. of this descent is within half a mile of the river.

This is a typical ridge profile found throughout the Cox - Kowmung basin. The present ridge was once the floor of an extensive valley of the (Shoalhaven) Wollondilly - Kowmung - Cox River. With renewed uplift the rivers were individually captured as they incised into the surface to flow in their present gorges of up to 2,000 ft. in depth.

The bridle track continues along the top of the Gingra Range, although its condition deteriorates. It passes a corral before descending to the junction of Gingra Ck. and the Kowmung River.

CHRISTYS CREEK AND RIDGES

ARABANOO CREEK

Arabanoo Creek differs from Wheengee Whungee Creek and Christys Creek in that it has no large waterfalls and so provides a fast walking route to the Kowmung rather than a canyoner's delight.

It takes only three hours for a small fast party from the car park at Kanangra to reach the Kowmung.

One may descend into the creek from below the cliff at Headless Rider Point or alternatively from the track at Glanfields Lookout, where fifty yards past the viewpoint there is a break in the lower line of cliffs. One must also be wary of the small cliffs that tend to flank the creek bed over the last 50 ft. of the descent.

Arabanoo Creek has cut its valley in folded Devonian quartzite and purple slate and so provides a very colourful assortment of detrital material for the stony bed. This is a typical example of all Gundungura streams and permits very fast and easy walking.

In the upper reaches there are several rather larger sets of falls while downstream from Glanfields Lookout a series of small narrow rifts through quartzite beds, are the site of half a dozen small and very picturesque falls of 15 - 30 ft. in height all of which may be easily negotiated.

These rifts alternate with open stretches of the valley where the vegetation is lush and bell birds and other less obvious forms of wild-life are abundant.

Forbidding cliffs beneath Cabbage Spire and Stonehag Hill flank the meandering course downstream to its junction with Tiamat Brook, while landslips associated with the 1961 floods are common along its bank.

Christys Creek is soon reached and 400 yards beyond, the Kowmung River.

COLBOYD RIDGE

From a cairn on the Kanangra Road one mile before Kanangra Walls follow a bearing of 140° magnetic across Marriliman Heath to Pindari Top. Descend the Wallaby Pass and cross Pindari Gap where Margaret Falls may be heard resounding from the depths of Tartarus Deep.

Follow the base of the cliffs of Mount Mungin to the clearing in Bungin Gap from which there is a pad over Col Knoll to Mt. Colboyd. Again sidle under the western walls of this peak and descend the relatively scrub free ridge to Mt. Le Tonsure.

Traversing over this range one may note that the cliff - flanked peaks of Colboyd, Bungin, Bulgin and Pindari, also Mount Wallarra and Mount Barrallier, and even Kanangra Tops are island remains of Permian sandstone (230 mil) sitting as caps on uplands and ridges of Devonian (270 mil) siltstone and quartzite.

On the slope behind Mt. Le Tonsure there is an interwoven mesh of dead scrub and saplings which is of some hinderance to progress, but once beyond this Arabanoo Peak is within easy reach.

From the summit the ridge descends gradually over half a mile before turning south. Towards the end of the ridge a large cairn marks the only route through the cliffs (Executioner Bluffs) and onto the sharp spur to Stonehag Hill.

With care, a route which involves nothing more than a scramble may be found through the cliff line flanking the eastern side of Stonehag Hill down the spur to the junction of Christys Creek and Arabanoo Creek. The Kowmung is then but five minutes away.

CHRISTYS CREEK

The upper section of Christys Creek (formerly known as Wallarra Rivulet) is a comfortable one day 'canyon' requiring 2 ropes. It is not a true canyon in so far as one may climb around every fall if so desired.

The trip may be extended to two days by continuing down Christys Creek, returning to Kanangra from Central Christys via the South Boyd Range, or more directly, via Barralliers Crown.

The trip is best started from Kanangra Road, four miles past the Boyd River crossing. A cairn marks the point on the Marrilman Heath. A car may be left here if one intends to return over Pindari Top.

From the cairn walk south for a hundred yards before descending into the gully to the right (west). Follow this downstream to the Christys Creek - Dione Dell Junction. Here there are two sets of falls. The first, Dione Falls, hurtle down a chute into a deep pool and is negotiated with an 80 ft. abseil down the right wall onto a rock ledge above the water.

Wallarra Falls are 50 yards downstream on Christys Creek and requires a 90 feet. abseil down a clean face from a eucalypt on the right side of the falls.

A quarter of a mile downstream is a third set of falls which plunge into a narrow cleft. Here the descent totals 140 ft. Scramble the first 40 ft. to a tree on the right hand side of the falls. The abseil is 100 ft., including two overhangs totaling 60 ft. of free fall to a ledge four feet above the pool. It is 200 yards to the next fall which requires one 60 ft. abseil. One may abseil off a sling around a bush growing just to the right of the falls.

It is a quarter of a mile to Margaret Falls which are some 330 ft. in height. One may continue down Christys Creek into Tartarus Deep and make a two day trip of it, or pull out here ascending the sharp quartzite spur to the left (N.E.) to Pindari Gap.

The Wallaby Pass onto Pindari is in the second cleft to the right (east) of the head from whence a walk on a bearing of 320° magnetic across Marrilman Heath returns you to the cairn where you started.

Margaret Falls may be by-passed with a high sidle to the right. However, the 370 ft. face may be descended by rope if desired.

A prominent dead tree half way down the face 50 yards to the right of the falls provides the key to the descent. The party should be limited to four.

From the top of the cliff do a single rope abseil (50 ft.) over grassy

ledges to the lowest tree belay you can see above the dead tree. A 135 ft. abseil is then required to reach the dead tree. From the tree an 80 ft. abseil brings you to a large grassy ledge with an abundant choice of tree belays for a further 110 ft. descent to the base of the falls.

Seven minutes boulder hopping brings you to a 15 ft. fall which in summer could be climbed down or jumped. However, in winter to by-pass it one must either do a high sidle to the left or a 75 ft. abseil from a tree on the left side. Cronus Falls, just beyond, in summer provide an excellent abseil down a clean face to the pool. However, winter canyoners are forced to sidle to the right, descending a small spur 150 yards downstream.

The next two small falls (50 and 30 ft. respectively) may be abseiled or by-passed on the left. At Titan Bluffs the creek which cascades through colourful boulders is negotiated to the left through lush vegetation hung with vines. The creek then turns sharply to the right and cascades through a small rift cut in red siltstone before plummeting over Barralliers Falls. Climb the spur to the left and descend via vines and scree slides to the base of Barralliers Falls. With the impressive 400 ft. face of Titan Bluffs rearing up behind these 70 ft. falls, it is little wonder that Barrallier became so discouraged at this point and turned back convinced that this barrier was impassable.

A mile downstream is the first of three falls. This may be sidled to the left, descending to the creek bed 50 yards downstream. Just beyond, the second small fall is sidled to the left and a rock scramble is required to return to the creek 30 yards from the falls. The third fall is by-passed on the right. Twenty minutes easy walking now brings you to Central Christys where there is an excellent camp site.

Below Central Christys walking is still confined to the creek bed and one can expect to get wet feet. Despite the ravages of floods the valley still has many attractions to the geologist. There are many ripple marks in metamorphosed siltstone blocks near the camp site while many a crevasse in the small cliffs that line the creek contains well formed quartz crystals.

Fifty-five minutes below Central Christys is Tagla Rift in which there is a 50 ft. swim. This may be avoided with a 30 ft. rope by doing a tricky hand over hand from a tree on the left side.

Executioner Bluffs dominate the valley as one continues over the cobbled creek bed, its meandering course flanked by small cliffs, to the Kowmung, 50 minutes away.

MOUNT BARRALLIER - BADBURY SPUR

This walk is commenced where the Kanangra Road turns sharply to the left through a stony cutting almost three miles before Kanangra Walls. Just before the cutting on the southern side of the road the old cart track to Kanangra can be seen. This is followed for 100 - 130 yards until an overgrown four wheel drive track veers off to the right. The track follows the ridge south through the low mallee scrub, over Plateau

trig and then swings east down Gogy Ridge into scattered eucalypts.

When the road peters out, turn south, down a small spur into Christys Creek. From the quartzite creek bed, ascend on to Sunshine Hill which is topped by a small grassy clearing. From this point the ridge on to Mt. Barrallier is easily definable.

In the centre of the saddle is an eight foot high remnant of conglomerate (Permian) resting unconformably on Upper Devonian Quartzite (the metamorphosed base on the Sydney Basin).

Continue on to Mt. Barrallier, descend to the base of the cliff line passing a large wallaby-frequented cave onto Wallarra Ridge. Just beyond the cave Barralliers Crown comes into view - a sandstone conglomerate remnant which makes a fascinating sight standing 150 ft. above the ridge.

On the western face of the Crown a cairn indicates the route to the top from which a magnificent panorama of the Kowmung country is unfolded.

Immediately beneath the Crown are the Hercolton Rocks - named after Hermann Colton, an early mountain trailer in the area.

This stretch of ridge is bared of trees and is covered with small "lucky stones" - relics of a conglomerate bed on the red Devonian siltstones and shales. Just beyond, the ridge begins a series of sharp steps. On the third of these a cairn marks the route onto Badbury Spur, a 1,450 ft. descent to the junction of Wheengee Whungee and Christys Creeks. However, the cairn has been placed too early on the ridge and one continues a further 100 yards along the ridge before descending its eastern blank to Badbury Spur.

The top of the spur is initially flat and open, however this is followed by a steep descent together with some dense scrub and trees towards the bottom, which make it necessary to keep to the centre of the spur where a track is now being beaten.

WHEENGEE WHUNGEE CREEK

Wheengee Whungee Creek is typical of various tributaries of Christys Creek. The valley is cut deeply into regionally metamorphosed and folded upper Devonian beds of siltstone, shales and quartzite. The creek makes many sharp turns as it follows joints, faults, dykes and rock junctions. The bed is of boulders and gravel, but the creek varies considerably in form - from narrow rock cut rifts, the walls of which are covered with vines, ferns, mosses and lichens to broad but thickly vegetated valleys.

The vegetation is principally small stunted trees with dense subtropical undergrowth including vines and epiphytes and stinging trees. Wild life in this sheltered valley abounds with lizards, snakes, goannas of several varieties, rabbits, wallabies, kookaburras, lyre birds and rainbow trout.

Wheengee Whungee Creek may be entered at either the creek junction, $\frac{3}{4}$ mile S.E. of Freemans Swamp, or from Wooglemai Creek.

CANYONS - UPPER SECTION OF WHEENGE WHUNGEE CREEK

Leaving the Kanangra Road at the old soil quarry, the Rover Trail is followed for almost a mile down the old timbergetters' road to just after the divided road rejoins the main track. As the road turns away to the right (west) take the old timber track to the left. This forks quite a few times, but only those that go in the direction of Wallarra Ridge should be followed. Take care not to be led into Christys Creek. Follow Wallarra Ridge for a mile before pushing south through scrub into the Canyons.

There are several cascades before the first fall of 40 ft. But immediately beyond, the creek plunges into a chasm. The falls total 450 ft. and include a 70 ft. fall above the main fall of 340 ft. It appears that these falls, like Wooglemai (120 ft.), Margaret (330 ft.), and Barrallier Falls (70 ft.) owe their immense size to the differential weathering of the less resistant siltstone and shale beds within quartzite.

Do not abseil down the 70 ft. falls, but ascend the left slope to the cliff line.

On the cliff top above the prominent overhanging rock there is a chimney of sorts, down which a 100 ft. abseil can be made, belaying off a tree. Thence another 100 ft. abseil can be made off a bush. The hanging rope is about 20 ft. from the only possible next belay and so it is necessary to pendulum to reach it.

At this belay point, a small tree, there is only room for three people and so imposes a limit upon the size of the party unless you have more ropes or choose another route. From the tree there is a 120 ft. abseil onto a rock scree down which one scrambles for 150 ft. to the creek bed.

There are several small and picturesque cascades before the junction with Wooglemai Creek, but these are of little difficulty.

WOOGLEMAI CREEK

Wooglemai Creek has derived its name from one of the aboriginals who accompanied Barrallier on his successful attempt to cross the Blue Mountains in 1802. Records, although confusing, indicate that he was finally forced to retreat at Barralliers Falls in Christys. In memory, many of the surrounding features, including Wallara, Le Tonsure, Gogy, and Bungin bear the names of the aboriginal members of his party.

From the Kanangra Road the Rover Trail is followed for an hour to Two Log Creek, which is then followed downstream for five minutes to Wooglemai Falls.

These falls are set at the head of a small gorge into which they fall for 120 ft. With some resourcefulness a belay may be found on the right side and close to the falls; an alternative is a difficult sidle to the left of the falls for 300 yards, negotiating small cliffs and slippery rocks to a large rock slide down which one descends to the valley floor.

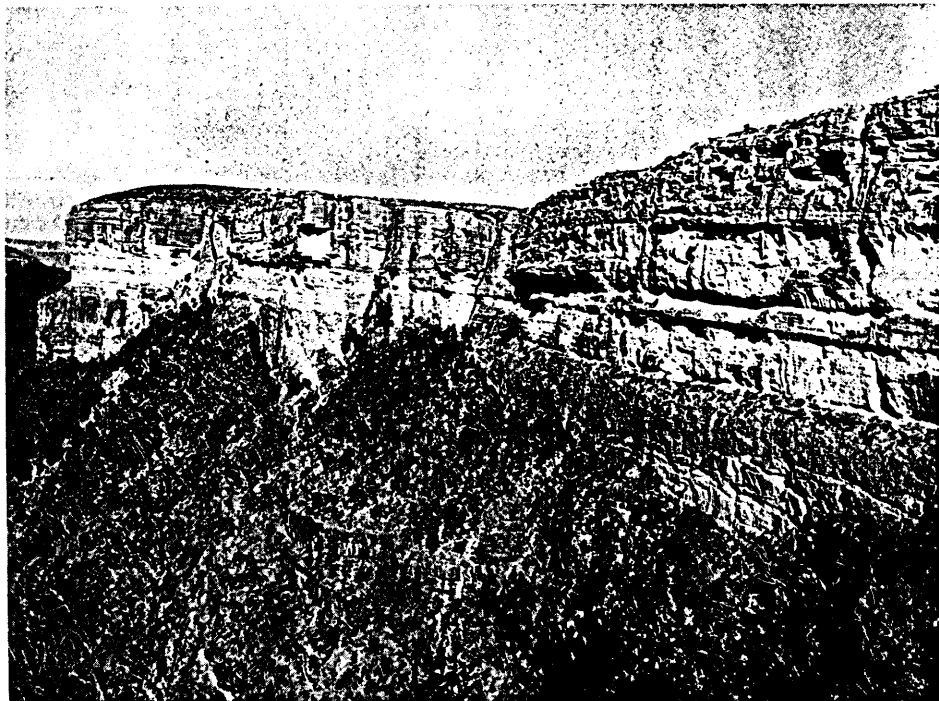
The creek continues to fall for 1,000 ft. before Wheengee Whungee Creek is reached. However, there are only two more 10 ft. falls and one 25 ft. fall - the last may be abseiled from a tree to the right of the falls.

Twenty minutes easy walking downstream from the junction of Wooglemai and Wheengee Whungee Creeks brings you to a fall in West Christys Creek. The fall is over 130 ft. high and may be abseiled using a double rope, or may be bypassed on the left hand side. Three small falls are negotiated before the next 80 ft. fall is reached 30 minutes later. This is situated in a magnificent walled amphitheatre just before a sharp bend in the creek to the east. Slide down eight feet onto a ledge on the left side and close to the fall where a belay may be selected 10 ft. diagonally above in the downstream direction.

However, wet feet may be avoided by choosing a belay further along the ledge.

Fifteen more minutes walking over the cobbled creek bed brings you to another fall beside which a 25 ft. abseil may be done down a wall from a tree fifteen feet from the water on the left hand side. The last fall is a 10 ft. slippery dip into a pool and may be so negotiated, or as an alternative may be traversed on the left hand side.

Two and a half miles pleasant walking, including a tricky rift 15 minutes before Central Christys, brings you to Christys Creek.



Kanangra Walls

- Peter Gissing

ROUTES EAST & SOUTH OF THE KOWMUNG



Mount Kowmung and Chiddy Obelisk from Mt. Marrup: to the left is the Kowmung Valley, in the background, Burraborang Walls.

- Peter Gissing

KOWMUNG RIVER

"The Kowmung River, with its incomparable reaches, flanked by river oaks and eucalypts, its narrow banks a succession of shady glens and open sunlit grassy patches is a paradise for many miles of its course. In the early morning, with the dew on the foliage and the brightest reflections of the sun on the waters, it has an impelling fascination".

F. D. McCarthy (1931)

The Kowmung River has many faces. It rises in a deep wild canyon of grey and pink granite, opens into a fast flowing, tree lined river stretching for 40 miles and finally again traversing a gorge, empties into the Coxs River.

The Upper reaches of the Kowmung, with its rugged canyon have over the last 150 years fended off all attempts of man to invade its inner sanctum. The bushwalker alone surmounted its battlements to gaze in wonder at its beauty.

Beginning about 1912 the first efforts were made to explore the country by pioneer Mountain Trailers and Sydney Bush Walkers who were equipped with little knowledge and none of the climbing equipment available today.

They spent days scaling the canyon walls in order to by-pass falls and cataracts that blocked their path down the river. But still its beauty could not but be admired "for as far as the eye could see, above and below, the river poured over the everlasting granite in cascade after cascade, now steady, now boiling, but working onward through a beautiful avenue of casuarina trees".

Today with new techniques and canyon bags, the lessons learnt and the routes pioneered, the Upper Kowmung canyon offers some of the most rewarding trips in the Blue Mountains. With the large amount of swimming, and the frigid temperature of the water, the canyon is virtually impossible during the winter months; but as a summer canyon it is idyllic.

I have heard it said of the Kowmung country - "the good Lord made a clerical error when measuring up the surface of the globe and as this is the last part He ever made, He had to stand it up on end to save wasting it!"

Once out of the ruggedly spectacular granite of Rudders Rift, the Kowmung takes on a new facet as it flows through metamorphosed Silurian beds. The valley widens somewhat and grassy banks shaded by casuarinas become more prevalent. However, bracken and stinging nettle are springing up. The occasional cattle pad may be followed between the patches of floods and the prohibitions on the grazing of cattle which, in years gone by, trampled it underfoot. By keeping to the inside of each bend, the going is easier and camp sites are never a problem.

This part of the Kowmung was first seen by Barrallier in 1802, when he reached the Kowmung at the Church Creek junction an hour before sunset

and followed the river downstream to camp at Christys Creek.

The Government Surveyor, White, in 1833, first superficially mapped the Kowmung Country, and called the river after its aboriginal name.

The early graziers of the late 1880's immediately recognised the value of Kowmung Valley as summer pasture and William Inglis and John E. Moore purchased "Inglis Selection", initiating the practice of driving cattle into the Kowmung. It was not long before bridle trails were worn from Oberon, the Burragorang and Colong. The cattle were driven into the Kowmung where they were grazed on open runs to be fattened before being driven to the sale yards at Picton.

In 1909, the Yerranderie gold field was declared and leases were taken up on the banks of the Kowmung, notably at the Cedar Creek junction. But many just pitched tents or built shanties, and Lanningans Creek and the Kowmung as far downstream as Christys Creek were panned.

At the Cedar Creek field the miners were supplied by pack horse along a graded track from Yerranderie, through Byrne's Gap and into Cedar Creek Basin. Rather than pan the river, pits were dug in the banks and the mined alluvium washed for gold.

A quarter of a mile below Christys Creek on the western bank an excellent exposure of the Silurian-Devonian unconformity occurs, in a bluff 50 ft. above the water. The Devonian conglomerate beds can be seen dipping in a north-easterly direction at angles of inclination ranging up to 35°. Beneath, the Silurian slate with a few thin intercalating beds of limestone are almost vertical.

As the river flows into the more resistant Devonian rock the valley takes on a more rugged appearance and Bulga-Denis Canyon is entered. Here the stoney bed meanders tortuously between frowning bluffs, (Sunrise and Sunset Bluffs), which, as their names imply, appear very colorful during the changing light of the day. With the exception of Fireflat Creek, where there is a good camp site, the typical grassy banks of the Kowmung are unknown over this stretch.

A fast party may traverse the canyon in two hours, but the standard time is half a day.

Beyond Denis Ridge the Kowmung again opens out to wide grassy banks now trodden by cattle whose pads provide the best route downstream.

Acknowledgement is given for the use of quotes from "Through the Granite Gorges" by Harry Savage, reprinted in "Kowmung Cavalcade" in the Sydney Bush Walker No. 323, 1961.

ROUTES EAST AND SOUTH OF THE KOWMUNG

To Scotts Main Range -

Denis Ridge

Although the Denis Ridge may be ascended directly from the junction of Denis Creek and the Kowmung a far better route lies up Rileys Spur.

Scramble up some rocks directly where Rileys Creek joins the Kowmung. On the lower parts of the spur faint traces of a former bridle trail may be distinguished. The spur is free of scrub and rises steadily for almost 1,200 ft. to the top of the Denis Ridge.

Here a burnt fence stretches along the top of the range to Mt. Feld on Scotts Main. The Range is also clear of scrub providing probably the best walking route into the Kowmung from Scotts Main.

Bulga Ridge

From the Christys Creek - Kowmung River Junction, Bulga Ridge provides a route to Yerranderie or one may continue into the Blue Breaks.

The Kowmung is best left 100 yards below the Christys Creek junction, the initial climb out of the gorge totals some 1,200 ft. and although steep there is little hindering vegetation beside a little mountain holly. Once having topped this pitch the ridge as far as Bugle Lookout is rocky but easy walking.

From the top of the cliff line at Bugle Lookout one overlooks the Cedar Creek Basin, while the gorge of the Kowmung meanders away to the south between steep forested interlocking spurs.

Provision was made in early surveys for an access route along the range and a bridle path became worn as on the Denis Ridge. This former trail passed through the cliffs on the western side of Bugle Lookout and sidled before regaining the spur and descending to the Cedar-Kowmung junction.

Cross the saddle almost behind the lookout. Beyond, the range widens with little undergrowth under the tall ironbarks. Twenty minutes walking brings you to a wide flat rock astride the ridge. From the top there is an excellent view into Cedar Creek displaying a few scattered blue bushes with Chiddy Obelisk and Mt. Colong notable on the horizon.

On the rock's surface there are several aboriginal spear sharpening grooves. These are found beside the little hollows in which pools form after rain and into which the implement was dipped before being ground.

Once on sandstone, some scrub bars the way to the fire road along Scotts Main Range, but it is no major problem. A 75 yard wide firebreak now scars the top of Scotts Main - even if little else can be said of it, it reveals the excellent views and simplifies locating of the right ridge.

The Inglis Selection Track - Byrnes Gap

Inglis Selection is no more than a few minutes walk from the Kowmung either up Church Creek, or along a former bridle trail over Blue Bush Point.

This 40 acres was initially selected by William Inglis and J.E. Moore, who were both pioneer pastoralists in the area. Late in the 1880's they applied under the provisions of the 1884 Crown Land Act and obtained this grant by Conditional Sale for the sum of £40.

The limestone bed in which Church Creek Caves lie, outcrops as a dark bluff at the eastern end of the clearing.

From Inglis Selection there are two alternative routes to Yerranderie. The first, the Inglis Selection Track, ascends Peacock Spur 100 yards past the limestone outcrop. This former bridle trail was used to move cattle from the lower Burragorang (Bimlow) along Scotts Main, and from the upper Burragorang through Byrnes Gap, into the Kowmung where there was more reliable feed and water.

The track is quite faint on the initial steep grade, but may be followed up the left hand (north) side of the spur onto the first terrace. Beyond this terrace the track is easily discernible, although care must be taken on the bench towards the top of the spur. Mt. Yuburra can be seen across the valley to the south-east and soon Chiddy Obelisk comes into view.

The track climbs onto the bench and continues towards the cliff line where there are some pleasant views of the walls of the Colong Main Range stretching away to the south.

A burnt fence is passed as the track turns to the north, crossing numerous spurs and gullies, sidling around Kowmung Mountain before descending a small spur to an abandoned section of the fire road to Scotts Main Range. Here the track is marked by two small cairns. Since the fire break has been bulldozed on either side of the present road, care is needed to recognize this abandoned loop at the crest of the grade out of Butchers Creek. The fire road leads through Byrnes Gap to Yerranderie.

Byrnes Gap is of historical interest being the pass described in Barralliers log, through which he journeyed in his attempt to cross the "Carmarthen Hills", Governor Arthur Phillip's name for what was later to be called the Blue Mountains. Barrallier writes, the pass is "half a mile in width with perpendicular sides and having been formed by a perpendicular cut in the mountain, the profiles of which north and south were of an immense height and presented to the eye a majestic aspect". However, the pass is named after Michael Byrne, a grazier, who began to take up land in the Colong Valley in 1901.

Passing through Byrnes Gap, the Tonalli Basin opens out before you, enclosed within the cliff lines of the Tonalli Range and The Mootik Wall, while Yerranderie Peak presents an impressive sight on the far side of the valley. The fire road descends to the Tonalli River where it passes by the burnt out ruins of a homestead in a large clearing.

The remarkable feature about this clearing is that it is the former river channel, now a cut-off meander carved in solid rock and displaying a small core. Excellent camp sites abound by the river, although it is probably better to camp in Yerranderie, as the Tonalli River contains small quantities of arsenic, derived from the arsenopyrites found in association with the lead and silver ore. This can prove harmful if one

drinks large quantities of this water.

The Armour Range

From Inglis Selection Mount Armour is climbed immediately behind the clearing. In the saddle behind the mount itself is the limestone road. Over these few acres on the ridge top just to the east of Mount Armour, a cement company has carried out test drillings to evaluate the quantity and quality of the limestone underneath. The drillings revealed that it was a very large deposit and the purest in the Southern Hemisphere. Plans have been submitted for the mining of the limestone in the near future, in spite of the dispute that has arisen over the possible pollution of the water supply and destruction of primitive bushland. Each of the bore holes has been filled in, but is marked by a peg and often a small pile of fresh limestone rock.

The road follows the Armours Ridge and passes through Squatting Rock Gap into Colong Swamp. The route to Yerranderie Lies through the Tonalli Gap (see under "Bindook Highlands").

Waterfall Creek

A mile upstream from Lannigans Creek, Waterfall Creek joins the Kowmung River. As you walk up the creek the steep grassy banks which bound the cobbled bed give way to small cliffs as the valley narrows and the stones in the bed become larger. Stinging nettle, which has colonised the creek bed since the 1961 floods, becomes more prevalent upstream, several small rifts bar your way and necessitate a little rock scrambling around and through them.

The Moonshine Creek junction is one and a half hours from the Kowmung for an average party. The Murruin Range can be reached up the Buangi Ridge which is best ascended from right at the junction. Alternatively, one may travel up Moonshine Creek and thence along Clearys Cedar Road. This was constructed in 1949 when Cleary in a blitz effort took all the cedar out of the State Forest before anyone could stop him.

But one should not miss the 120 foot waterfall after which Waterfall Creek is named. This is only a couple of minutes above the junction and is quite an impressive sight. A route to the top of the falls does lie up the gully on the southern side of the falls, but this is very difficult the rock being loose and the gully colonised by stinging nettle and stinging tree.

Cambage in his interpretation of Barrallier's log postulated that Barrallier, having camped at Bindook Swamps, started up the Murruin Range before, for some unknown reason, he turned into Waterfall Creek and must somehow have negotiated this fall to reach the Kowmung. How he managed to do this with a troop of soldiers and horses, it is difficult to conceive and this throws some doubt on Cambage's interpretation.

The top of the Buangi Range was burnt by fire in 1965 and provides a good route to the Murruin Range.

THE UNIVERSITY ROVER TRAIL

Following the virtual isolation of Colong Caves by the waters of Lake Burragorang and in anticipation of a gate being placed at Mt. Werong across the road to Bats Camp, the University Rover Trail was first marked in 1961 by aluminium markers as a negotiable route, to be made into a track as soon as possible across the South Boyd Range and up Lanningans Creek to Colong Caves and Bats Camp.

The trail begins approximately two miles past the Boyd Crossing on the Kanangra Road, just beyond a large soil quarry located on the northern side of the road.

The trail travels 200 yards from the road to Rocky Top Swamp camp site in order to provide water for would-be campers on 'the night before'. On the southern side of the swamp the trail turns sharply east till it strikes a timber-getters' road which it follows for a mile and a half before taking to the bush. In a few hundred yards Wheengee Tor is reached - a granite mass of rocks which is a lonely landmark in the so common Kanangra mist.

The country here is quite open and consequently the trail is only sparsely marked. Another ten minutes walking brings you to Hodges Swamp.

At a point between Hodges Swamp and Two Log Creek in the right weather one can obtain an excellent view of Christys Creek and the Kowmung Gorge. A visitors' book has been placed here, in which all trail users are invited to leave their names and make any appropriate comments.

Two Log Creek is crossed and Mount Goondel lies beyond. Goondel was the name of the chief of the Gundungura Tribe at the time of Barrallier's journeys and was "the King of the Mountains" whom Barrallier, as an envoy of Governor King was sent to find, and in fact did meet.

From Mount Goondel the trail descends the South Boyd Range to the Kowmung River.

Trail Camp offers the last water before the Kowmung. Here, there is a small clearing atop of the range and water may be obtained from Doris Creek, 100 yards down the hill to the west.

From this point the vegetation becomes semi-impenetrable "scunge" - the Crew's term for the secondary sucker growth which has sprung up following the great fire of 1928. This fire made the route to the Kowmung impractical to the bushwalker before the trail.

Mount Lannigan is approximately three to four hours steady walking from the Kanangra Road. The trail is now well marked and there should be no difficulty in following it. Bird Call Lookover is one of the better viewpoints from the trail. It overlooks the Kowmung Canyon, dominated by Dicksonia Bluffs with the Murrain Range topped by Mount Shivering (3,678 feet) on the horizon. To the South is Mt. Colong girded by its striped skirt of washaways and landslides, stark reminders of the November 1961 floods.

Lanningans Spur is an easy descent - Lannigans Knob being bypassed on its eastern flank.

Over the last 200 feet the trail turns off the middle of the ridge at Prima Crest and descends to the Kowmung lined with casuarinas, opposite Lannigans Creek. Twelve miles of trail and a 3,000 foot descent lie behind.

Good camp sites are plentiful on the southern bank of the Kowmung, although Mossy Camp has been colonised by stinging nettle. Many other excellent sites may also be found in the lower reaches of Lannigans Creek.

However, it must be remembered that any serious flooding is likely to alter this position.

The picturesque grassy river flats so common in the lower reaches of Lannigans Creek are soon replaced by steep grassy sides and pestering stinging nettle which abounds in the creek bed of gravel and boulders - another legacy of the 1961 floods.

Before these floods, the bed showed obvious signs of the gold panning which was carried on right through the area, notably on the Kowmung, and along its banks today one may still stumble upon old pits and adits.

A few minutes below the caves is the Roman Bath. Although only two feet deep, the pool fills a small natural basin in the beautifully coloured quartzite bedrock - it is one of the few pools in the stony creek bed.

At the Caves Creek junction signs indicate Colong Caves 200 yards up Caves Creek and the trails to Bats Camp.

The Acetylene Spur route offers a good track up the steep spur to Moogan Spur, past Mount Moogan and through Moorain Gap to the fence marking the boundary of Tomat Creek Station and thence on to Bats Camp where the trail terminates by the fence on a small spur, 50 yards to the west of, and across Bindook Creek from the locked gate.

The Acetylene Spur route is the easier of the two marked trails, and was used during the Great Depression of the 1930's to carry bat droppings (which contain phosphates) from Colong Caves to Bats Camp.

The Carbide Spur route is a much more spectacular, although more rugged route to Bats Camp. The three-quarters of a mile up Lannigans Creek is characterised by rock scrambling over huge limestone blocks. These have been chipped a whitish-blue during floods and so add a freakish beauty to the creek.

Above this very scenic creek stand the bluffs of the limestone outcrop through which Colong Caves wander.

Carbide Spur may be recognised by a large washaway. This may either be ascended a short way before climbing on to Carbide Spur itself or the spur may be tackled directly from the creek bed 50 yards past the washaway.

Carbide Spur is steep and is not recommended for the unenergetic.

Once at the top of the climb, the trail leads past Mt. Moogan to its junction with the Acetylene Spur route half a mile before Bats Camp.

COLONG CAVES

Introduction: South of the Kowmung River, in the heart of 'Gundungura' lies a series of limestone outcrops containing caves. For many years these caves have been freely accessible and have, as a result, suffered serious damage at the hands of thoughtless visitors and deliberate vandals. Scouts and bushwalkers, however, unconsciously, have not been entirely blameless in this regard but, as most of the caves have now been included in the Kanangra-Boyd National Park, it may be anticipated that in future the caves will be afforded a much greater measure of protection.

Caving is a specialist activity and should not be undertaken lightly. Caves are a rare and delicate environment and an irreplaceable part of our natural heritage; they cannot withstand maltreatment by careless visitors. For these reasons it is suggested that any person interested in caving or, more particularly, speleology, should associate themselves with a recognised speleological society. It is not necessary to join immediately, as most such groups will accept visitors on their official trips. In the interests of safety and conservation, any person intending to do any serious caving is urged to join a speleological society - Paddy Pallin will be pleased to supply information.

The following notes may be of interest to people visiting the Colong Area.

Location and Names: The general localities of three groups of caves are shown on the Gundungura Map: Lannigans Creek, Billys Creek and Church Creek. All lie within the Colong (correctly pronounced 'Coolong') Caves Reserve and may be regarded as constituting the Colong Caves.

Olivier Trickett, who visited the area in 1899, when referring to the limestone belt between Lannigans Creek and Church Creek, stated: "Caves occur at intervals throughout the whole length of the limestone. I beg to suggest that they be called the Colong Caves after Mt. Colong". (Annual Report of the Dept. of Mines, 1899, p.211). Unfortunately the Geographical Names Board has seen fit to restrict the name to the caves at Lannigans Creek and for this reason they are shown as 'Colong Caves' on the Gundungura Map.

History: The limestone is of Silurian age (i.e. about 410 million years old), however, the caves are not thought to have started to form until about one million years ago.

The first white man to sight the limestone was probably the French explorer, Ensign Francis Barrallier, as he passed down Church Creek in 1802. The outcrop on Lannigans Creek was first mentioned by C.R. Scrivener in 1893, but caves were not discovered until a few years later by a local cattle-duffer, Lannigan.

Following Trickett's visit in 1899, the area of the limestone belt became Reserve No. 29839 "for the Preservation of Caves", though it seems that no trustees were appointed until October, 1938.

Numerous other persons visited the caves and in 1935 Oliver Glanfield and Aub Winton commenced a survey of the Onslow Cave to Kings Cross. Ninnian Melville of Coast and Mountain Walkers surveyed Lannigans Cave later that year and their combined map has been in use ever since.

In November, 1939, the State Government proclaimed Reserve No.68800 "for Public Recreation and Preservation of Caves at Colong" over the same 1,400 acres as R.29839 had covered, a set of regulations were published, trustees were appointed and parties were guided through the caves at Lannigans Creek by Mr. F. Edwards, at 3/- per person. The regulations, to say the least, showed great foresight and reflected the hopes of the original trustees. They included among their prohibitions such things as climbing trees, scaling fences and gates, posting bills, holding a performance or entertainment, becoming intoxicated and upsetting the guide by entering the caves without him or refusing to show your ticket.

The Trust, however, did not meet with a great deal of success and seems to have exercised no effective control over the caves since at least 1950. Until the establishment of the Kanangra-Boyd National Park (which includes the caves at Lannigans and Billys Creeks) in December, 1969, there was, in practice, no responsible body looking after the caves. With the establishment of the Park and the appointment of a permanent Ranger, the caves (with the exception at the present time of those at Church Creek) have entered a new era of conservation.

Church Creek Caves: These are the most northerly of the 'Colong Caves' and are located about four miles NNE of Lannigans Cave, at the northern end of the Colong Caves Reserve. Until recent years these caves were seldom visited and poorly documented. Recent investigations, spurred on by mining proposals, have revealed a number of cave systems; the largest being over 1,200 feet long and well decorated. If mining were to commence, permission to enter these caves would have to be obtained from the cement company, but once that stage was reached the caves would not be likely to be there for very long.

There is still potential for new discoveries in this area and every effort must be made to prevent mining taking place. If mining does proceed, and Church Creek Caves and Mount Armour are destroyed, there will be very strong economic arguments for mining the Lannigans Creek outcrop later.

The future of Gundungura's caves, and to a large extent Gundungura itself, will depend on the outcome of the protracted battle over the mining between conservationists on the one hand and the State Government and Associated Portland Cement Manufactures Ltd. on the other.

Caving: Regulations under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1967-69 require any person wishing to undertake speleological activities in a National Park to obtain the written permission of the Director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. (This applies also to Tuglow Caves which, though not included in 'Gundungura', are within the Kanangra-Boyd National Park.) Enquiries should be made to The Director, National Parks and Wildlife Service, 189 Kent Street, Sydney, 2000.

BINDOOK

HIGHLANDS



"The Slot"-Bindook Chasm
(about 60' in height)
Note the large chock
stone at the top and the
columnar jointing in the
basalt.

Second abseil is down
right hand face.

- Peter Gissing

SOUTHERN ACCESS ROUTES

To reach Barrallier take the Wombeyan Caves Road from the Hume Highway two miles past Mittagong. Turn right at Goodmans Ford and follow the track on the right bank of the Wollondilly through a farm yard, and thence downstream until two homesteads on the Murruin Bend are reached - this is Barrallier.

The story goes that Ted Hughes had a place called "Talloweena" on the Wollondilly, next to old Mick Carlon's, whose homestead was three miles downstream from his at Murruin Creek. "Murruin Vale" it was called. When the Post Office was to be opened, Hughes reckoned it ought to be at his place and be called Talloween. However, it was located at Carlon's; to show some impartiality the Postmaster General's Office called it "Barrallier".

Additional Maps:

- Military Ordinance Sheet - "Mittagong", 1 inch to 1 mile series.
- Lands Department - "Bindook" - 2 inches to 1 mile series.

Tomat Creek

The Murruin Bend today marks the point at which a tributary of the Warragamba, backcutting, captured the Wollondilly River which flowed over Bindook Swamps into the Kowmung-Cox System as we know it today. This system at this time drained westward until soon after the Cox was also captured by the Warragamba.

For the Wollondilly at Barrallier and follow a cattle track downstream. The track is over-shadowed by diorite cliffs, which alternate with open grazing flats as far as Tomat Creek.

Tomat Creek is followed upstream, its rock-strewn bed confined between lushly vegetated steep sides and small cliffs exemplifying columnar-jointing. This jointing theoretically in a hexagonal pattern, is formed with the cooling of the magma or lava body. The geology of the whole district is igneous in origin ("Bindook Porphyry") but due to its complexity and isolation it is still to be mapped accurately.

The sub-tropical vegetation that covers the lower slopes of the Gorge includes the stinging tree, of which it is well to be wary.

It may be recognised by its characteristic large, heart-shaped waxy leaves, which upon being brushed inject poison through fang-like hairs. If the sting is bad enough it may prove fatal.

One hour's walking up the creek, and Tomat Falls appear. The valley abruptly ends in an immense grey and forbidding wall, towering 700 ft. above. A thin white ribbon of water appears to hang down its centre.

Some rock scrambling over and around the house size blocks and slipping over the wet granite brings you to the amphitheatre at the base of the falls - the rewarding sight is really worth the effort.

The best route around the falls lies up a scoured out gully some 300 yards downstream from the falls. This washaway provides a route through

the impenetrable growth up the eastern side of the gorge.

Above the falls the valley becomes quite shallow - rock hopping is in order, with a small amount of easy sliding where discordant quartzite beds have narrowed the channel and occasionally have initiated small picturesque waterfalls and cascades. The banks are typically grassy and abound in eucalypt saplings of every variety.

One and a half hour's walking reaches a miniature quartzite gorge through which the creek cascades from pool to pool. "The Tussocky", aptly described by its name, lies immediately behind. The creek swings sharply to the east and a cattle track may be picked up on the eastern bank, merging in a short distance into a jeep track which crosses Tomat Creek half a mile upstream. It climbs a spur, passes through a gate and crosses open country to the Gardner Brothers' homestead at Gumbedding Swamp.

The airstrip, just finished in 1964, is quite in contrast to the burnt timber mill, a relic of the lumbering activities prevalent in the area from 1948 into the early 1950's.

Bindook Chasm is less than an hour away along the Bindook Yerranderie fire road which follows the old Camden-Oberon stock-route, while Mount Colong and Yerranderie are half a day and a day's walk respectively to the north.

Bullnigang Ridge

At Gumbedding Swamp a jeep track is picked up in the cleared gully to the South-West of the Gardners' shearing sheds. Pass through the gate at the head of the gully and follow the track on to the range.

Forty-five minutes walking brings one to Honeysuckle Creek beyond which the forest of eucalypts and wattle gives way to ironbarks on the grassed top of the plateau.

Above the swamp one passes through a gate. Take care to follow the top of the range and not to be led by any side track into Murruin Creek. It is three miles approximately to Bullnigang Hut located in a large clearing at the head of Shawney Creek.

Continue south, past the hut, for one hundred yards to a new wire fence. Turn west and follow the fence for three-quarters of a mile up hill and down dale along the bulldozed fire break to where another fence is met at an angle at an iron gate.

This is the top of Bullnigang Ridge running down the west side of Shawney Creek. Beyond the gate an old bridge track may be picked up and followed along the ridge top from which one can obtain a good view of country to the south.

The track descends into a deep grassy saddle, here the bridle trail forks and there are two alternative routes to the Wollondilly River.

One track continues on over the tops and descends via a long and very steep but open spur to the junction of the Wollondilly and Murruin Creek at Barrallier. This is the most direct and quickest route.

The alternate route is to follow the bridle track which descends off the east side of the saddle and sidles for a quarter of a mile before descending a spur beside a burnt out fence into Shawney Creek. But care is needed as once having left the saddle the track becomes overgrown and is virtually obliterated. A mile of rockhopping down Shawney Creek brings one to the Wollondilly and it is but a short way up stream to Barrallier.

Murruin Creek

From Barrallier on the Wollondilly River follow the meandering course of Murruin Creek upstream where by crossing the stony bed from river flat to river flat one can make good time. The grassy flats unlike most beside Gundungura rivers are completely clear of bracken and with the interlocking steep spurs of the surrounding ranges rising above the valley they make quite a picturesque scene.

It is five miles to Bindook Creek where the burnt ruins are all that remain of a hut where Neville Lang used to spend the winter months tending pastures. A good route to Bindook Station lies up the ridge over Bindook Mountain.

Beyond Bindook Creek the valley of Murruin Creek is cut into Silurian Metamorphosed quartzite, purple slate and yellow phyllite beds. Here the valley narrows, the grassy sides steepen, and the river flats are no more, as the tall casuarinas shade the rocky bed.

From Limestone (or Boomer) Creek to Nymph Gully progress is slow. Small cliffs flank the creek, which often tumbles through the occasional small quartzite rift. Directly above, the Boomer Ridge towers above the enclosed valley floor.

Just beyond Nymph Gully several large boulders have landslided into the creek and now serve as a "block up". Behind these for the next mile as far as the Haunted Loops the creek disappears beneath the stones and cobbles which have been dammed up like a lake behind the obstruction.

If you leave Murruin Creek at the junction of Karmai Creek, Midga Spur provides the best route on to Mount Shivering. There is some scrub along the ridge as it makes a large sweep before approaching Shivering from the south-west where a grassy slope on the basaltic soil leads to the trig cairn.

Like Mount Colong, the avenues cut through the foliage allow far ranging views provided the haze is not too bad.

A faint jeep track leads across the saddle to Winnima Peak and Lang's Road down the Murruin Range. The route will probably take the average party a full day to complete, though it may be done in six hours by a small fast party.

BINDOOK CHASM - "THE SLOT"

Bindook Chasm is an hour's walk from Bats Camp, this is the quickest means of access, although it may be reached by the walker up Murruin or Tomat Creeks or over the Bullnigang Ridge from the Wollondilly. (See section above.)

The Wollondilly, it is believed, once flowed over Cosgroves Plain and the Bindook Swamps into the Kowmung-Cox's System which at that time drained to the west. But in recent geological times (one million years ago approximately) the Warragamba, back cutting, captured the Wollondilly and the Cox's River independently and diverted their courses to flow east into the Nepean. Subsequent uplift (the Lapstone Monocline) has raised the old river valley at Bindook 800 feet above its former level. Into this uplifted surface Bindook Creek has carved a huge chasm into which it plunges in a spectacular set of falls, some 600 feet in height.

The best view of the chasm as a whole can probably be obtained from Chasm View Point which is ten minutes walking from the road. But for a closer view of the falls a column of diorite which overlooks the falls from the promontory just to their left, provides the best vantage point.

The water spurts out of the 200 feet deep slot and plunges into a pool sixty feet below, where it overflows the basin edge and falls a further one hundred and eighty feet to the rock strewn chasm floor.

For the Canyonier, here is a short but thrilling descent - 100 yards before reaching the chasm edge Bindook Creek has cut down through the igneous rock, removing the vertical columns (so formed by columnar jointing) to form a slot 200 feet deep and as little as ten feet wide through which it cascades from pool to pool.

From a tree thirty yards around on the left hand side of the slot, the first abseil is made through a bush, fifty feet to a ledge which runs from the first cascade to a huge chock stone which is jammed in the centre of the slot.

A second cascade underneath the chock stone falls sixty feet into a third pool stretching twenty yards to the mouth of the slot.

A piton on the ledge to the left under the chock stone provides a belay for the second abseil through the fall to a small ledge at water level. From here one may climb along a semi-submerged ledge to the right of the pool or swim to the mouth of the slot. A bit of rock climbing is called for in traversing right, across the cliff face at the head of the chasm to a scree-filled gully which runs down to the top of the 180 foot fall.

One may easily scramble around the last fall to the right or left, however, a belay to the tree on the right of the falls offers an irresistible 240 foot abseil.

Two ropes are sufficient for a single strand descent, but four ropes (doubling up) are recommended.

The best route out of the chasm lies up an obvious gully to the right (west).

BATS CAMP TO YERRANDERIE

Bats Camp may be reached from Kanangra Walls via the Rover Trail, by car through Oberon and Mt. Werong, or on foot from the Wollondilly to the south via any of the negotiable creeks (Murruin or Tomat) or ranges.

There are three standardised routes from Bats Camp to Yerranderie, but many variations are possible.

(I) Bats Camp, Myanga Mountain, Colong Station, Colong Gap, Yerranderie

This is the quickest most direct route, requiring approximately half a day's walking.

From Bats Camp cross the creek and head south or east across open country for 200 - 300 yards until one strikes the jeep track which parallels the Bindook Creek Swamp.

The track may be faint and in places more aptly described as a cattle track. This is followed for approximately 25 minutes with the massifs of Kooragang bounding the far side of the Swamp, on which a few wallaroos and ducks are commonly seen.

Bindook Creek Swamp is crossed 50 yards upstream from its junction with Kooragang Swamps.

In the winter months after rain, wet feet may be avoided by finding the strategically placed line of fallen trees.

Follow Kooragang Swamp upstream on its south bank through open and very pleasant country. Cross the head of the swamp and ascend the northern slope, keeping out of the gully onto Myanga Mountain.

Although Myanga Mountain stands but little above the ridge, it is easily distinguished by the sharp change in vegetation, particularly to bracken on its basalt cap.

The ridge to Mt. Meier is easily discerned dropping away to the east. Once off the basalt cap, the ridge opens out to peppermint and ironbark forest with scattered grey gums.

Fifteen minutes of pleasant walking brings you to Rocky Point, from which one can enjoy the excellent view of the Colong Valley and particularly Square Rock standing out behind the clearing of Colong Station.

The pass off Rocky Point is well marked with cairns and a short descent is made down the open spur. By descending into Haslops Gully 100 yards above its junction with Barralliers Creek, the best route to Colong Station clearing can be taken by heading due east across the tops of the lightly wooded spurs.

This was the sight of the first settlement by pastoralists in Gundungura when in 1827 Samuel Blackman, a big landowner in the Burrarorang, rented the Station (totalling some 2,560 acres, which he called "Cullong").

Behind the Station, Square Rock, with bold unbroken cliffs, rises impressively.

From the hut an old jeep track continues up the spur to the Colong Road. This was constructed in 1961 following the serious flooding which washed away sections of the previously used road through Kowmung Gap to the limestone test drilling sites on the Armour Ridge.

Two hundred yards to the right (east) along the road an old timber-getter's road branches off and is marked by a blazed tree and a wooden cairn.

The track passes under Square Rock and past the ruins of a burnt out shack. This land was part of the holdings of Michael Byrne, one of the many graziers who took up portions in the area from 1885 into the first decade of this century. Following Byrne's death in 1949, the land was purchased by Alfred Eilbeck who was a mill hand on Tomat Creek Station. Eilbeck built the now gutted shack and took on a hermit's existence, raising pigs and doing some lumbering, of which there are still many signs.

The track deteriorates to a pad which leads down to Byrnes Swamp. The route lies across the swamp which gives way to ti-tree.

This may prove very dense in patches, particularly if one is following the old telephone wire. This is a course of fencing wire, which, prior to the abandoning of Yerranderie, provided a telephone link between the Post Office and Lang's homestead at Bindook.

Strike out of the ti-tree up to the cliff line to the east, where the old bridle track may be located, and followed over the gap.

Just beyond the gap a fresh white sandstone face indicates a small prospecting shaft driven into the coal seam.

Just below the shaft, a magnificent panorama opens before you of the Tonalli Basin - an amphitheatre bounded by the cliff-lined sandstone scarps of the Tonalli Range and Mootik Plateau.

Both the bridle track and the telephone wire provide routes to the now regraded old limestone road. A cairn, built where the wire crosses the road, for the second time west of Yerranderie, indicates the beginning of the ascent to Colong Gap.

Twenty-five minutes' walking brings you to West Yerranderie. But along the road the huge washaways that devastated the road in 1961, the mine workings in the first gully, (probably the Great Western or Nevada Mine) and finally the monstrous Silver Peak Mine, whose huge mullock heaps tower above the road, provide interest and pleasure for the inquisitive walker.

(II) Myanga Mountain - Mt. Colong - Tonalli Gap - Yerranderie

From Bats Camp the route described above is followed to Myanga Mountain, from which the ridge is followed north along the top of the range towards Colong Causeway.

There is quite a bit of scrub and secondary growth which is some hindrance, but does not really make the going difficult. If seen in the right season, the banksia, bottlebrush and wattle in flower present a splendid sight and compensate slightly for the obscured views.

It is one and a half hour's walking to the Causeway over which a pad has been beaten in places.

There is a good view from the angular basalt scree that is the threshold to Mt. Colong itself. Revealed is the Kowmung Gorge to the west, Bindook Station stands out to the south, while to the east Square Rock is in the foreground and beyond, the golden Burragorang Walls.

The change to basalt is reflected in the vegetation, the trees stand taller and straighter, while the lush tufted grass in past dry seasons, has often drawn the sheep from dry pastures on the surrounding lowland.

The massif of Colong is fittingly topped with a fifteen foot cairn, and with the periodical rotting of the stakes which provide the means to the top; a piece of rock climbing is called for to reach the visitors' book.

The swathes through the foliage to enable surveyor sightings on surrounding trigs which include Mounts. Shivering, Jellore, Beloon, Yerranderie Peak and Maxwell Top at Kanangra Walls, give some indication of the nodality and height of Colong in relation to the surrounding peaks. The view from the trig cairn on a clear day, despite interference by the trees is sufficient to make the ascent worthwhile.

From the cairn, descend the basalt cap to follow the ridge north-east across a saddle and from the knob (2,910 ft.) turn north and descend onto the walled promontory, which overlooks Tonalli Gap.

Right on the point a chimney requiring 30 feet of cord to lower packs, provides a pass through the cliff line.

A new road has been bulldozed through Tonalli Gap in mid 1965, following the former bridle trail and linking the "Old (1965) Limestone Road" up the Tonalli Valley and the Colong Road through Colong Swamp to provide a route to the Mt. Armour drilling sites where mining operations are pending.

Yerranderie lies one and a half hours away along the road. But for the geologist there are two rather interesting phenomena. The first is the exposure of a porphyritic intrusion towards the bottom of Mootik Spur. The large white quartz phenocrysts in the red ground mass appear quite beautiful even to the novice.

Barrallier (1802) even records in his log having recognised this rock in boulders in the Tonalli River.

At the junction of Mootik Gully and Tonalli River there is the ruins of an old farm set in a small and very pleasant clearing. In blocks of sandstone behind the ruins in the river bed, abound shell fossils, Upper Devonian in age (270 million years old).

(III) Bats Camp - Colong Caves - Old Lannigan's Hole Track - Tonalli Gap - Yerranderie

From Bats Camp, Colong Caves can be reached in forty minutes via Acetylene Spur or via the more scenic, although rougher, Carbide Spur route in seventy minutes. Just up stream beyond the caves is Green Gully. The former bridle track up the Gully has been obliterated and so

a little scrub bashing and rock scrambling is required initially.

The grass is lush, the bracken tall and dense and with the continuous ringing of the bell birds, it is only the tall vines of stinging nettle which bring one back to reality in this would-be paradise. Towards the head of the Gully the stinging nettle becomes so bad that it is advisable to make the short climb out onto the western spur.

This is, in fact, what the now overgrown track does. It passes an outcrop of conglomerate and ascends onto the bench (ridge top), along which it continues towards Mt. Colong.

Before the first hillock is reached, the track turns off the ridge to the left and begins the sidle around Mt. Colong to Colong Saddle.

Mt. Colong may be climbed from this hillock. Cross the saddle (marked with a cairn) and follow the spur which swings sharply east as it gains height. Scramble up the angular basalt scree of an old landslide to the summit. If the old bridle track is lost, sidling proves very slow and scrubby and the washaways may prove very difficult.

At Colong Saddle a much eroded fire road takes one through the head of Colong Swamp to the 'Limestone Road' along which one can make one's way through Tonalli Gap to Yerranderie (see the above section).

Square Rock - (Little Rick)

"Seen from a distance the Rick resembles a battleship floating on the foliage, its prow pointing southwards".

C. Anderson and F.G. Campbell (1928).

This rock mass, surrounded by unbroken and partially overhung sandstone cliffs, has intrigued all who have known it. So much so, that it was a common practice for the citizens of Yerranderie to troop out to Little Rick on a Sunday with a picnic lunch and attempt to climb it. But none succeeded.

Who did make the first ascent is strangely enough, debatable. Credit has gone to rockclimbing ('Tiger') members of the Sydney Bush Walkers, who made many notable first ascents prior to the war. One is claimed to be Little Rick, where they found it was necessary to use a bow and arrow. However, the exact date has been forgotten.

But record was left on the cairned summit in the form of a scroll in a Rhinegold bottle. Members of the University Crew, who climbed Little Rick in 1965 found this scroll molded with age. All that could be deciphered was "First Ascent"

But the picture is complicated by a copper plaque wired to a tree at the Southern end of the Rick which reads:

"5th February 1938 -
Stanley Mathews
Glen Mathews
Reg Chapman
Victor Wise
Walter Cruise
of Bankstown - 1st Ascent".

Apparently this ascent predates the S.B.W. effort, as these climbers could not have failed to notice the cairn and Rhinegold bottle, whereas the obscure copper plaque could easily have been missed by later parties.

Two routes climbed by members of the crew in 1965 are described -

"The Pipes" - Mild Severe

This climb is on the west wall 100 yards north of the washaway and may be recognised by the pipes protruding about 30 feet up the cliff. Who put up this climb is not known, except that they were probably members of the Sydney Rock Climbers, and appears to be the first recorded use of artificial aid in N.S.W.

1st pitch - 100 feet.

The first pipe is 30 feet above the ground.

Fifteen feet up over rotten rock to a permanent bolt and bracket belay. Traverse left and then swing back to the right to reach the pipe.

Up twenty feet to three pipes grouped together. The highest has an eye and may be used as a runner.

Continue up over a rotten block to a tree, move left to a pipe (running belay) and then up over a small overhang to another pipe to which you belay.

2nd pitch - 60 feet.

Climb directly up over three slabs and a small mantleshelf to belay on a casuarina outside a large cave.

3rd pitch -

Scramble left to the top.

"Yankee Doodle" - Severe (graded as such due to rotten rock)

The climb is on the east wall 100 yards north of the Southern point and lies up a sloping crack from a tree in a corner.

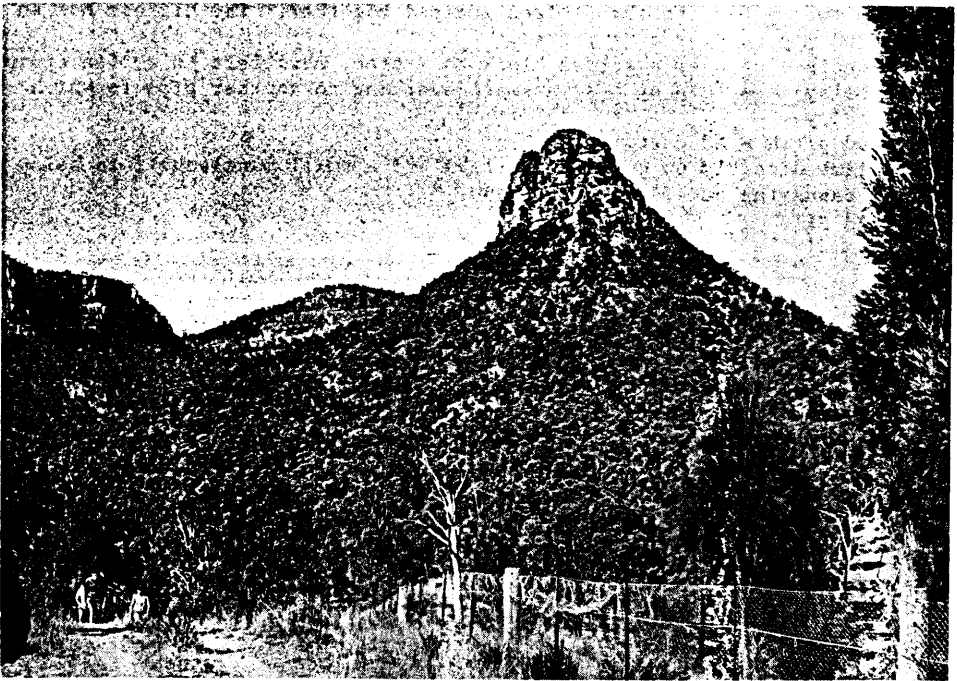
Climb up to the tree (10 feet) and belay.

1st pitch - 90 feet up the crack in the corner using Lomandra as holds. Piton runners are essential. Up over rotten mantleshelf (crux) to a rotten shale band. Belay on the obvious tree.

2nd pitch - 60 feet scramble left and up to the top.

EASTERN ACCESS

ROUTES



Spectacular Bonnum Pic. The first European to see it, Francis Barrallier, reported it as a mile and a quarter high.

- Winston Rohan Jones

SHEEHYS CREEK - NATTAI RIVER

Maps: Land Department - "Nattai" a 2" to 1 mile series.

Blue Mountains and Burragorang Valley Tourist Map.

A sealed road to Valley Colliery (Coal Mine), located in the cliffs above Lake Burragorang, provides access to the Lower Nattai down Sheehys Creek, which is named after an early settler in the Burragorang. Cross the Nattai Bridge over the upper reaches of the lake and follow the fire trail through the locked gate up the west bank of the Nattai River.

Forty-five minutes of walking brings you to a hut, constructed by the Water Board. This is the site of the first of four silt traps that are being constructed on the four major rivers flowing into Warragamba Dam.

The track continues up the valley, through grassy clearings, and open forest, overlooked by 500 ft. cliffs standing some 1,500 ft. above the valley floor. A rather weathered abandoned homestead is passed and the Nattai crossed. A further three miles brings you to a locked stockman's hut; one of the early settlers, P.J. O'Brien held 13 acres here, and the hut is still used by stockmen grazing cattle in the Nattai. Beyond Martins Creek the fire road reverts to the former farm road and re-crosses the Nattai $\frac{3}{4}$ mile upstream, to reach Vineyard Flat.

HILLTOP - STARLIGHT'S TRACK - NATTAI RIVER

Maps: Military Sheet - "Mittagong" - 1 inch to 1 mile series.

Land Department - "Nattai" - 2 inches to 1 mile series.

Blue Mountains and Burragorang Valley Tourist Map.

Hill Top Station is on the "Picton - Mittagong Loop" railway line ten miles north of Mittagong and may be reached by train, or by road from the Hume Highway. From Hill Top follow the road north-west for 7 miles along the Wattle Ridge to the farm at M.R. (Mittagong) 424632. The fire road is followed for 1 mile past the property towards The Point. Large cairns indicate the route and the top of Starlights Track.

The cut and banked track is well marked with paint and blazes and it takes less than an hour to reach the Nattai River at the site of the now destroyed Emmett's Hut opposite McArthurs Flat.

The Nattai River is extremely beautiful with large grassy flats often covered with thick growths of bracken, while wattle saplings and other greenery line the banks. The river shows evidence of flooding, but it is nevertheless easy walking along its banks, often on cattle pads and if the water is low directly down on the sandy bed.

The now faint old farm road that once provided access up the valley may be picked up on Round Flat and thence followed, generally keeping to the flats on the inside of each bend, past a half completed hut at the Alum River junction to Vineyard Flat at the bottom of Beloon Pass.

BELOON PASS - JOORILAND STATION

Maps: Lands Department - "Nattai" - 2 inches to 1 mile series.

To ascend Beloon Pass, climb the spur on the southern side of Travis

Gully and sidle beneath the cliffs into the gap before descending to the creek when the scrub becomes very thick.

An arrow painted on a boulder in the creek bed and a small sign nailed to a tree above indicates where to leave the creek and ascend the pass itself.

From a vantage point just above the pass the Burragorang Valley stretches out before you with its man-made lake and rolling grassy hills. Beyond, the peaks of Gundungura etch the horizon - notably the unmistakable hump of Colong and the flat topped summit of Yerranderie Peak.

Jooriland Station and guest house can be seen on the banks of the Wollondilly - these are less than two hours away.

From the pass, descend the open forested spurs to strike the well graded road near Colemans Creek. Do not be misled by a road that branches off the main fire road at Colemans Creek.

The fire road is followed till it descends through the Douglas Scarp passing across the unconformity from Permian Sandstone on to Silurian metamorphics. Just beyond, take the side road that leads down the spur to the Wollondilly at Douglas Flat and walk upstream for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile till the road is again rejoined just before it fords the river opposite Jooriland Station.

WANGANDERRY - JOORILAND STATION

Maps: Blue Mountains and Burragorang Valley Tourist Map.

Military Sheet - "Mittagong" - 1 inch to 1 mile series.

Lands Department - "Nattai" - 2 inches to 1 mile series.

Wanganderry lies 14 miles from Mittagong on the Wombeyan Caves Road. A quarter of a mile before Wanganderry itself a farm road turns off and heads north over the basalt 'Tops' to Malcolms Farm. The Tops afford a splendid panorama. Table-topped Mount Jellore, another former volcanic peak stands out to the S.W. above the plateau surface. At your feet is the green Burragorang, while away to the N.W. the massif of Mt. Colong and Yerranderie Peak may be distinguished against the backdrop of the broken Tonalli Range and the Blue Breaks.

As you approach Malcolm's Farm the road forks. The left branch is taken past the corrals and down Burnt Flat Creek. Although easy to follow, the fire road deteriorates rapidly and in places has been completely washed away by floods.

The extreme Upper Burragorang was sprinkled with settlers as early as the 1880's, their means of access being this track to Wanganderry and thence to Mittagong; but by the 1890's they had all left because of inaccessibility, droughts, rabbits and financial worries.

William Malcolm established a small cash store on his property at the top of the settlers' track up Burnt Flat Creek, and for 55 years his farm has been the starting place for walks through the Burragorang.

The Wollondilly fire road from Bullio may be reached in 45 minutes and is followed north over grassy and lightly wooded spurs to Bonnum Pic. this pinnacle of rock, protruding from the Walls is obscured completely

until rounding a bend right at its base, its impressive 500 ft. cliffs tower above you making quite a distinguished peak.

Just beyond the Pic a fire road branches off and is followed down the spur to the Wollondilly River, its banks lined with the indigenous casuarinas which add so much colour to the flood ravaged river. At normal flow the river is easily forded at any number of shallows. But if the river is in flood, a canyon bag would be the only way of preserving dry gear, as a swim may be called for.

On the western bank, an old road on the terrace is followed downstream for half an hour to the recently occupied Jooriland Station, and two hundred yards beyond is an old guesthouse.

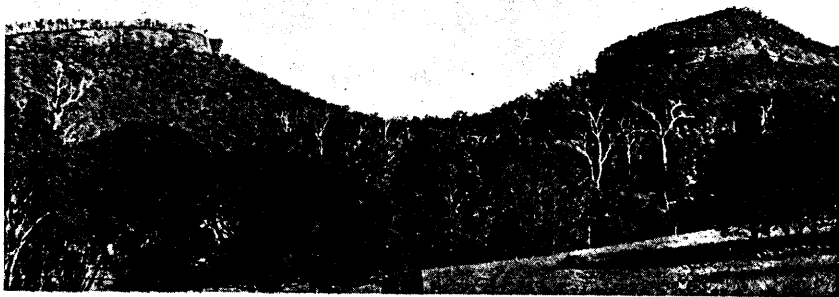
JOORILAND STATION - YERRANDERIE

The road forks at the guesthouse, but rejoins at the top of the ridge before descending into Jooriland Creek. The ascent out of Jooriland Creek affords the walker a final view of the colourful Burragorang - now abandoned to nature and bushwalkers.

Douglas Scarp, marking the Silurian-Permian unconformity, stands out quite clearly when seen from this vantage point and may be traced the length of the valley. The "Sheep Walk" is a well graded road maintained by the Water Board leading over the ridge into Byrnes Creek. The road then climbs steadily for five miles till it forks at the site of the former "Twin Peaks" Station, of which the homestead and shearing sheds still remain.

As the road passes into and out of the valley of Byrnes Creek, it crosses and re-crosses the Silurian-Permian unconformity. One of the lower Permian beds of sandstone is rich in silicified casts of spirifers (brachiopods) - fossil shallow water sea shells. Specimens may be picked up beside the road.

At the former Twin Peaks Station the south fork follows the old 'Oberong Stock Route' through Colong and Bindook Station to Oberon, while the right (north) fork brings you to Yerranderie, two miles distant.



The Peaks, Yerranderie

- Grahame Mullane

YERRANDERIE



Yerranderie Post
Office - 1964
- Mr. D. Hilyard



Yerranderie Post
Office - 1969
- Greg Middleton

Yerranderie Post Office: as it was (1964) and as it is (1969). Restoration by Tonalli Mining and Engineering Company.

YERRANDERIE MINING HISTORY

Pre Silver (1897)

Following Barrallier's journey through the Gundungura Area in 1802, when he passed very close to the present site of Yerranderie, graziers during the 1820's began to take up holdings on the fertile river flats in the Burragorang Valley.

In 1871, two aboriginals, Billy Russell, then chief of the Gundungura Tribe and Billy George, found galena (a simple silver-lead ore) at a spot approximately two miles east of the present site of Yerranderie Post Office. The Feldsworth Mine was subsequently established and between 1874 and 1885 Messrs. A.J. Liddington and F.C. Shadforth and others took up leases. But little prospecting was done and these were forfeited.

In 1894 Mr. E.F. Pittman, a government geologist visited and reported on the silver field at the time. He pointed out that any future prospects would be greatly handicapped by the nature and difficulties of transport.

It is doubtful whether the main Yerranderie Lode had been located at this time.

Silver 1897-1950

In 1897 Mr. James Vigar Bartlett took up several leases in the vicinity of the present site of Yerranderie and the field began to produce good quantities of silver. It appears that the main lode was first worked early in December 1898 and between 1899 and 1923 the field was fully active with numerous mines.

About 1913 production began to decline slightly due to higher smelting and transport costs, and never did recover. During the depression years of the 1930's prices were low, and from 1939-1945 much of the plant and machinery was taken away for war purposes.

In the post-war period there was little effort to revive Yerranderie as it once was, and the mines were finally abandoned in 1950.

Between 1898 and 1950, 10,843,406 oz. of silver and 27,339 tons of lead were taken out of the Yerranderie Mines. In addition, 19,742 oz. of gold was mined, and panned in the Yerranderie field.

The total value of these mining operations was estimated at £1,972,000 (approximately \$4 million).

Present Position

With the flooding of the Burragorang in 1960, access from Camden became impossible and it appears that any future mining operations will have to support a lengthy and more costly means of access.

Large reserves of silver ore still remain in the field and leases applied for, and held, are being surveyed. Re-opening of some mines is possible, but the future is generally uncertain.

THE TOWNSHIP

Harold Clyde Manning applied in 1891 for the conditional purchase from the Crown, of portion 77, and in 1903 for portion 78, in the parish of "The Peaks". Before the conditions of the grant were completed and before he received the deeds in 1911, the boom town of Yerranderie, with a population of 800, had sprung up on his land.

Records show that Manning leased and sold blocks of land to the townsfolk up till 1923, before his death in 1926. The Trustee Company of his will went to the extent of surveying a housing estate in East Yerranderie and continued to sell blocks up to as recently as 1957.

But Yerranderie's heyday had long since past. In 1908, 351 men were employed in the mines, and ore to the value of £114,029 (\$228,058.00) was raised. It is obvious today that only a fraction of the many cottages that made up the village of Yerranderie are still standing.

These cottages were initially sited more or less along the line of lode (from east to west) and close to the main mines. Consequently the village springing up over the open grassy ridge tops spread laterally over three-quarters of a mile - however, the townsfolk still considered Yerranderie as one unified village.

Stores and other public services located from one end of the town to the other, but eventually two nodes emerged - West Yerranderie centered on the Post Office, general store, butcher and the service car garage, and East Yerranderie, where the Miners' Arms Hotel, police station, courthouse and another store and butcher shop were located.

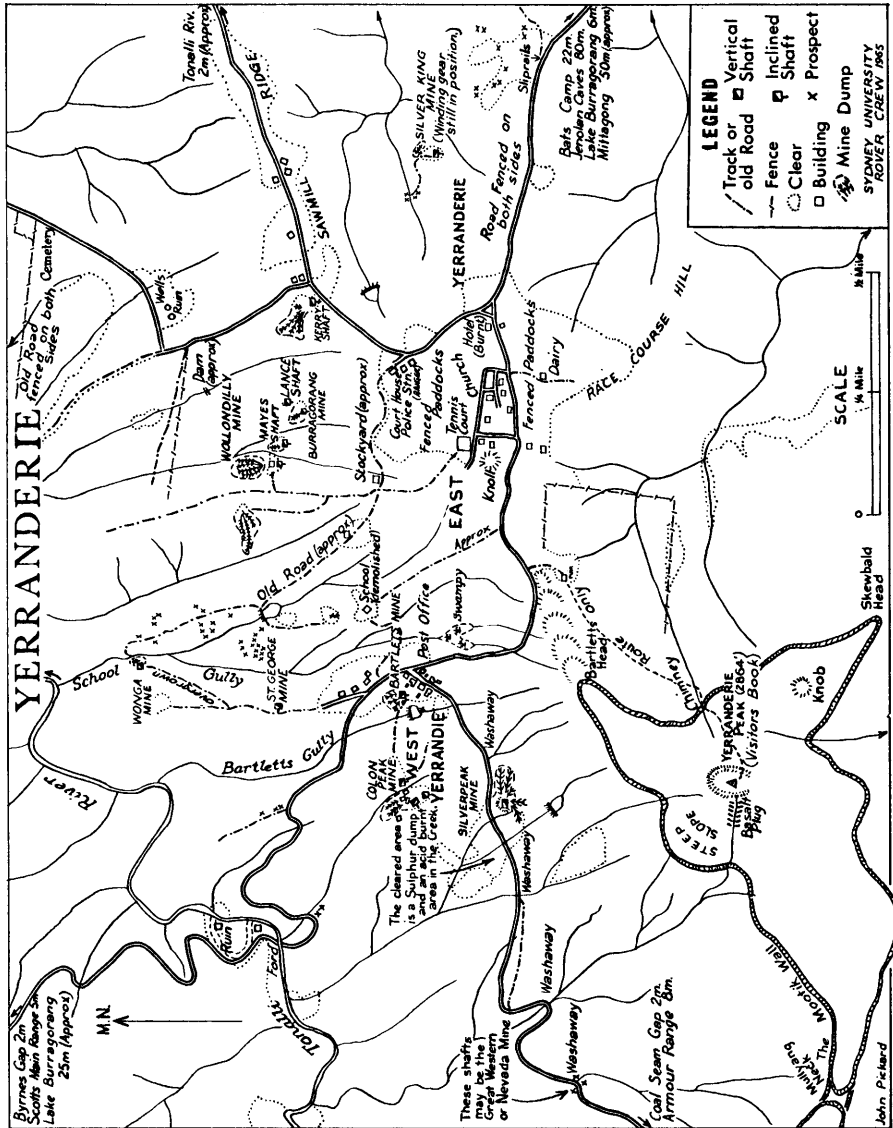
Since mining operations were suspended in 1950, Sydney Black Wattle has sprung up and by isolating West Yerranderie, has served to emphasise the division of the township.

Today, this ghost town is a relic of a past mining age, and with its old mines and buildings it provides days of fascinating exploration and speculation. Some points of interest that can be identified are:

West Yerranderie

The Post Office: A double storey building with a convenient water tank and fireplace which provides excellent accommodation. The view off the balcony is magnificent. This was occupied by Mr. Jack Martin and his wife to the very last minute in 1960. When they left, the lake waters were lapping over the Wollondilly Bridge. In 1968 it was re-occupied.

General Store: This is the large store opposite the Post Office, displaying a large Vincent's A.P.C. sign.



Bakery: Near the Post Office

The School: This was built for 54 pupils but by 1947 average attendance had declined to thirteen. The school is located centrally between East and West Yerranderie. However, the main building was demolished by the Gardner Brothers in 1964 and now with a few improvements can be seen at Gumbedding Swamp, the new homestead of Tomat Creek Station.

East Yerranderie

The Police Station: Has now been taken over by the Metropolitan, Water, Sewerage and Drainage Board. ("M.W.S. & D.B." for short.)

The Court House: Next to the police station. This has been cleaned up, and is probably a better spot to spend the night than the post office in West Yerranderie.

The Church: The red brick building that stands on the hill. Unfortunately someone left the door open and let the cows in. There is a bit of confusion as to who owns the building. All records indicate that it is a Roman Catholic Church, but it is also claimed to "St. James" Church of England, opened on 28th July, 1923.

Butcher: Opposite the Church.

Miners' Arms Hotel: This was right on the corner and has been burnt down, only a couple of chimneys are left.

Dairy: Non-existent now.

Slaughter House: Also demolished.

Race Course: This has since been ploughed up.

Tennis Courts and Cricket Pitch: These are still in a good state of repair.

Sawmill: Was burnt down but the ruins are located on the Sawmill Ridge Road.

The Cemetery: The headstones make fascinating reading, it should not be missed.

On arrival in Yerranderie, the best camp site is at West Yerranderie beside the dam behind the general store. But if you prefer the comfort of home, accommodation can be found in one of the numerous buildings still standing.

There are three notable vantage points in and about Yerranderie. The first, and by far the least energetic, is from the balcony of the Post Office at sunset. Secondly, from the mullock heaps of the Wollondilly Mine, preferably at dawn. The view of the orange cliffs of the Tonalli Range and Chinaman Bluffs, lit up by the rising sun, is magnificent. And, thirdly, Yerranderie Peak - no visit is complete without visiting the "Pic", or, as it is known to the locals, somewhat paradoxically, The Far Peak.

A house set back from the road at the base of Bartlett Head indicates the best route to the summit. Ascend, heading diagonally across the spurs staying at least 100 feet below the cliff line at the base of which the scrub is quite thick.

Upon striking the main gully, follow it up to the cliffs, where there is a small concealed break in the cliff line beside the gully. From this point it is but a scramble up a clear slope to the trig station from which the view is truly spectacular.

NOTABLE GEOLOGICAL FEATURES

There are three main features, from the geological view point, to be seen at Yerranderie.

(I) Basalt Pipe of Yerranderie Peak

On the western side of Yerranderie Peak, a basalt pipe is exposed over a height of 145 feet. The nepheline basalt is not of the same type as that found on Mt. Colong, which is olivine basalt. The basalt on the exposed face is broken up into blocks up to two feet in size, which are only loosely held in place.

(II) Permian Tillite

The only evidence of glacial activity in the Gundungura Area are sediments resembling Tillite deposits at Yerranderie. Tillite is a sedimentary rock made up of the debris dropped by melting glaciers. It is usually poorly sorted and the individual sand grains, pebbles and boulders are typically angular. This angularity is due to grinding in the one plane by the movement of ice.

The Tillite outcrops below Bartlett Head on the road between East and West Yerranderie. Here it is exposed on the spur sloping towards East Yerranderie. Two further exposures are known; one just north of the Wollondilly Mine, which is probably partially covered by the mullock of the mine and the second in School Gully at the junction of the small creek coming down from the dam. The junction is about 150-200 yards upstream from the Wonga Mine.

(III) Silver Mines

The Reason d'etre of Yerranderie is the silver ore. This ore is of the fissure vein type, i.e.: it has been formed in quartz veins which occupy shear zones or fissures in the country rock. The main Yerranderie lode has been mined to a depth of 1,448 ft. in the Wollondilly Mine and presumably the lode goes still deeper.

Although the lode may be followed through many different types of rock, the economic deposits of the silver ore are confined to quartz-porphry.

The country rock is a Devonian volcanic complex, for simplicity referred to as the Bindook Porphyry.

The minerals in the ore are of various types, mostly lead, silver and arsenic sulphides - galena, arsenopyrites, etc.

Galena crystals can be found on almost any of the mullock heaps, but probably the best specimens are at the Wonga Mine.

Although there were many prospecting shafts, trenches, and adits, only a few mines ever produced much silver. These were: Bartlett's

Colon Peaks, The Silver Peak (or Bore Block), the Wollondilly (or Yerranderie), the Wonga and Great Peaks Mines and the Kerry Shaft. These are all located on the east-west arc of the lode which dips at about 40° to the south. All the mines worked the lode by following the dipping veins.

The exception was the Silver Mine which has a vertical shaft before following the dipping lode.

The most interesting mines to visit and examine are - The Silver King which has the old winches and winding gear still in position. The Colon Peaks Mine, also still has much of its gear in their housings.

In Bartlett's Mine, the underlay shaft is located 75 yards behind the general store and the timbering and shaft still remain.

The Silver Peak - the largest mine at Yerranderie is noted for its phenomenal mullock heaps and sulphur dumps. The crushers are still in position, although the machinery and winding gear have been removed.

THE FUTURE

Geologists commenced prospecting in 1968 and their activities continue. One mining company has restored and occupied the Post Office, and another has made use of the courthouse. Difficulty of access seems to be the only factor retarding a resurgence of active mining.



Yerranderie Peak (2864') from Byrne's Gap, across the Tonalli Valley.

- Greg Middleton

THE BLUE

BREAKS



The Blue Breaks from Yerranderie Peak: Green Wattle Gap, Vengeance Peninsular* and Bull Island Gap (left to right). Chinaman Bluffs in foreground tower above Tonalli River.

- Greg Middleton

BUTCHERS CREEK

Butcher and Bullock were two cattle 'duffers' who in the 1820's, before any settlers had moved into the Burratorang, took up residence in a large cave at the Butcher's Creek - Cox River junction. Unlike Lanningan, who operated later out of Colong Caves, they gathered about them at one time a gang of ten or eleven. They would rustle cattle from the upper Cox Valley towards Bathurst and drive them into the Burratorang where they would be grazed for several months, before taking them through Colong and Taralga to sell them in Goulburn. On returning, they would pick up more cattle to take back into the Burratorang and thence later into Bathurst for sale.

Butcher's name lives on in the name of this creek.

Butchers Creek is a most beautiful valley. One may wander down any spur off Scott's Main, and if happening into the tributary creeks, small grassed river flats generally make for pleasant walking.

The upper reaches of Butchers Creek, carve a meandering rocky course, where ti-tree and paperbark give way to rich growths of bracken as one proceeds downstream. However, following the creek can be slow and at times rough.

The creek tortuously meanders between small cliffs and steep sides, flowing pool to pool over a bed of boulders and gravel. The banks alternate between small well shaded grassy flats and narrow rock walled cuts, where the creek passes through more resistant sub-vertical quartzite beds. A more delightful creek you could not ask for.

But as you proceed downstream the grassy flats become fewer as the sides steepen and the cliffs become more numerous. Below Grog Shop Bend the creek flows into a virtual canyon.

The Grog Shop, although the origin of the name is unknown, is a particularly fascinating sight being three pinnacles of slate, girded by screes, standing some 200 feet above the creek bed. The slate is Devonian in age and has been folded during metamorphism, so as now to be inclined at some 20° from the vertical to form the three pinnacles. Above and behind the pinnacles is a conglomerate-sandstone cliff. Between the slate and the basal conglomerate is the Devonian-Permian unconformity, that appears on valley sides, between peak and valley floor throughout Gundungura. This unconformity marks the intervening period of erosion and tectonic movement that occurred with the cessation of sedimentation during the Devonian (270 million years ago) till it resumed again in the Permian (230 million years ago).

The Creek may be left by way of a short ascent up the spur opposite Grog Shop Bend onto Scott's Main Range.

THE TONALLI RANGE

"In tracing the above Range, the obstacles I have met have been great. The ranges were formed of immense masses of disconnected rock, many being surrounded by perpendicular wall or cliff which made them inaccessible -". So said White, a government surveyor who was instructed

to commence a survey of the country between the Wollondilly and the Great Dividing Range in 1883.

When you look out from the balcony of the post office in Yerranderie, Byrnes Gap and Bull Island Gap appear as mighty breaks in the blue range of peaks whose bold cliff lines enclose the Tonalli Basin.

From Byrnes Gap an obvious gully in Gander Head provides the route onto the range where sandstone blocks on Axehead Mountain present an impressive sight. A scramble up a gully on the western side and a 20 ft. climb up the gap between two of the blocks are the only obstacles to the summit. But 50 yards away a second peak poses a debate as to which is the true summit. A razor back ridge leads onto the second unnamed peak, a rock scramble up the point and you walk across the top awed by the spectacular panorama which can be enjoyed from anywhere along the range.

Alchemy Mountain looks even more impressive from this uncommon vantage point against the backdrop of grassy hills, man-made lake and magnificent walls of the colourful Burraborang Valley. The Tonalli Basin lies at your feet with Yerranderie Peak standing impressively above the Mootik Wall. To the west, the firebreak can be seen tracing Scott's Main Range away to the north, while beyond the gorge of the Kowmung, Mt. Shivering, the South Boyd Range, Kanangra Tops, Mt. Cloudmaker and the double cliff line of Ti-Willa are recognised as one's eyes sweep along the horizon.

Ninety feet of overhung cliff prevent a direct descent off the end of this peak. By retracing one's steps 40 yards a scramble down a gully on the west side provides a route through the cliff line.

The razor back ridge continues, Defiant Peak and The Sentinel are both walk-up peaks and require some scrambling in the descent - finally into Green Wattle Gap. Bull Island is easily climbed through the obvious break in the cliffs that can be seen from The Sentinel. This is the only peak that was spared from the ravages of the bushfire which, in July 1965, swept the Tonalli Valley and over these tops.

Cross the saddle and ascend the Vengeance Peninsular. The threatening 300 feet cliffs flanking both sides of Mt. Ruthless are avoided by keeping to the centre of the spur. Between Mounts Ruthless and Remorseless there is a spectacular three foot wide saddle precariously perched over a 200 ft. cliff.

Mt. Remorseless is the highest peak in the Tonalli Range and has been suitably cairned. Passing onto Mt. Relentless the descent begins. By keeping to the centre of the ridge there is a scrambling route through the cliff lines before a scrubby spur leading to the junction of Green Wattle and Bull Island Creeks.

So long as the Range remains free of scrub, this trip can be done comfortably in half a day. And until secondary growth recolonises the ridge above Chinaman's Bluffs - the round trip, returning to Yerranderie through Bull Island Gap will make a spectacular one day excursion.

YERRANDERIE - CHINAMAN BLUFFS - BROKEN ROCK RANGE

From the courthouse (which provides an excellent abode in Yerranderie East), take the road north-east towards the cemetery. A quarter of a mile and you pass the mullock heaps of the Kerry Shaft on your left - continue straight ahead - do not take the road to the cemetery.

In clearings along the ridge top are several ruins of former houses and a sawmill. A mile beyond the Kerry Shaft a cairn indicates an old road leading off down a spur towards the Tonalli River.

After half a mile, turn right off the faint track and locate and follow the spur that runs NNE into the stony bed of the Tonalli River at the base of Chinaman Bluff. If you have made the correct landfall, looking downstream an orange tinted 150 foot cliff faces you as the river makes a sharp bend to the north.

The climb out of the river is initially quite steep, but it is only a scramble to the top of the fifth Chinaman as compared with the overhung 100 foot bluffs that cap the adjacent ridges. The gradual ascent of the spur towards the 300 foot cliffs of Alchemy Mountain takes little time.

If you have a keen eye you may pick up traces of the old bridle trail from Green Wattle Creek to Yerranderie via Bull Island Gap. But this has long since fallen into disuse and fires and other subsequent erosion are obliterating it.

Just below two small hillocks that top the spur turn east and sidle for forty minutes in the shadow of Alchemy Mountain into Bull Island Gap.

Until the bushfire in 1965, Yerranderie to Green Wattle Creek was the best part of a day's walk - much of it spent bashing through eight foot high scrub between Chinaman Bluffs and Bull Island Gap. Now this stretch may be done comfortably in an hour. However, regrowth is rapid and it will not be long before the scrub is back.

Bull Island Creek, once a delight to walk down, is just beginning to recover from the ravages of the fire. Nevertheless it is an extremely easy creek and it takes but 45 minutes to Green Wattle Creek, partly on the grassed banks but mostly in the stony bed itself.

At the junction with Green Wattle Creek, a grassy flat patch beneath a grove of bluegums provides a very pleasant camp site.

Just below the junction a route lies up a short easy ridge onto the Broken Rock Range between Toddy Head and The Broken Rock. From this broad, rather open ridge top, there is a magnificent view looking back into the Blue Breaks as well as the more frequented peaks and gorges to the north and west.

Navigation may be tricky and care is needed to choose the right spur to the Grog Shop and Butchers Creek.

LOCAL POLITICS

KANANGRA-BOYD NATIONAL PARK

Most of the Kanangra-Boyd National Park is included in the Gundungura area. Enquiries should be made to The Director, National Parks & Wildlife Service, 189 Kent Street, Sydney. 2000.

WATER BOARD

Most of Gundungura is within the Warragamba Dam proclaimed Catchment Area. Visitors to the area should comply with restrictions concerning such areas. Information may be obtained from the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board, Bathurst Street, Sydney.

LOCAL LANDHOLDERS

As can be seen from the Gundungura Map, there are some private landholdings in the southern corner of the area. 'Bindook' and 'Colong' are owned by Neville Land and 'Tomat Creek' by Ralph and Morris Gardner. These gentlemen depend on this land for their livelihood - their rights as landholders must be respected.

Bats Camp

Bats Camp is on a Permissive Occupancy, held by the Gardner Brothers, whose responsibility it is to see that it is maintained in a proper way. They have no particular wish to stop people camping there, but if it is not kept clean they may be forced to take action to stop camping. There is a limit to the number of holes you can dig to bury rubbish on a particular piece of ground - in the case of Bats Camp (as with Colong Caves) the time has come when campers should take their non-combustible rubbish home with them; please do.

Fences and Access

The fences around the various grazing leases must not be tampered with. The land is private property and offenders have been and will be prosecuted. Vehicular access is not at present readily available beyond Bats Camp. Lang and the Gardners have been known to let people through - if they have been properly approached.

Dingo Traps

Dingo traps may be set on roads between Bats Camp and Yerranderie and along Scotts Main Range, particularly between April and July. They are marked by pieces of wood projecting onto the road above them and usually by signs at either end of a section of road on which traps have been set. Please don't interfere with them.

PETROL AND WATER

Many people enter the area with insufficient petrol and, in dry seasons, water. Neither Lang nor the Gardners are there to supply petrol, so make sure you take enough. The round trip from Oberon to Bats Camp is almost 100 miles, though petrol can be obtained at Black Springs, Edith and at Jenolan Caves. Petrol stations in Oberon do not usually stay open late on Friday nights - Hampton is generally the last chance.

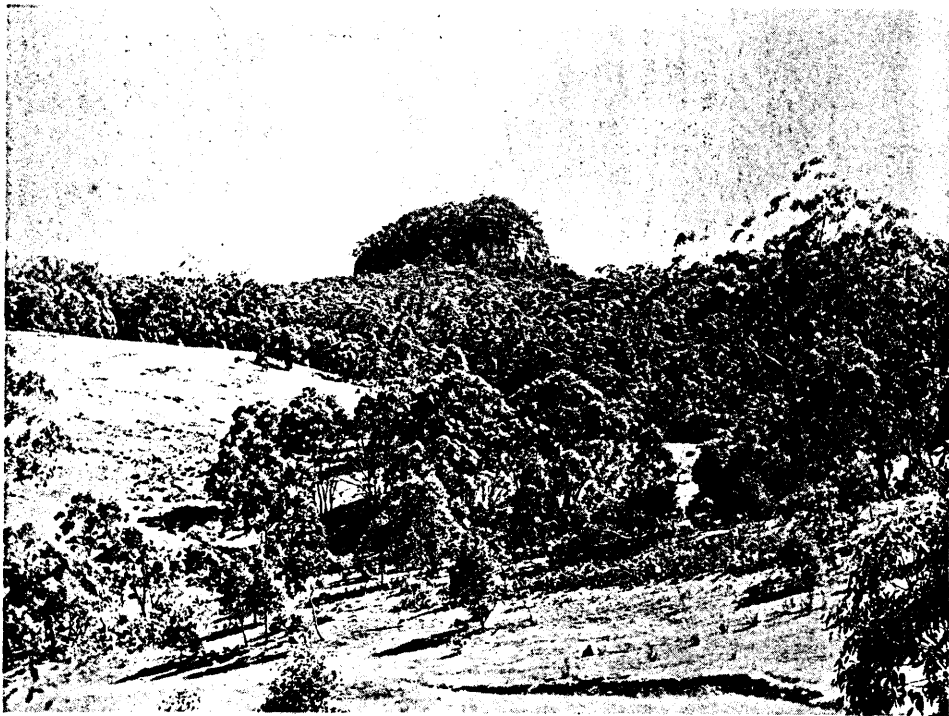
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- The Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceedings contains many interesting articles scattered through its archives.

CORRIGENDA

<u>Page</u>	<u>Line</u>	
33	8	The Mount Armour limestone deposit is far from being the purest in the Southern Hemisphere. In fact it is only about average for N.S.W.
22	34	For Mount Mungin read Mount Bungin.
26	31	For successful, read unsuccessful.
29	39	Add, after line 39: flood debris and secondary growth that seem to be due to a combination of.
31	5 & 6	For Rileys, read Reillys.
31	19 etc.	For Bugle Lookout, read Bulga Cone.
32	8	For Peacock Spur, read Church Hill.
35	27	For Bindook Creek, read Kowmung Creek.
43	17	For Bindook Creek Swamp, read Bent Hook Swamp.
61	14	For Alchemy Mountain, read Bull Island Peak. (Also on Page 62 twice)
64	12	The Edith Petrol Station closed in June, 1970

These corrections should avoid any confusion between this book and the Gundungura Map 3rd Edition.



LITTLE RICK