

SYDNEY MIDWINTER 1999

Midwinter Cruise

No, not the Aurora Australis doing another intrepid midwinter voyage down to the pack but an ordinary Sydney ferry cruising the Parramatta River bound for the Sydney 1999 Midwinter dinner. At the bow a group of expeditioners enjoying the bracing wind of a Rivercat at speed.

The Parkroyal Hotel at Parramatta was selected this year in response to many comments over the years for a location more central to the Sydney metropolitan area, with an accommodation deal the experiment was underway. Over 100 expeditioners, family and friends gathered for pre dinner homers. In quick time true expedition spirit was flowing, no doubt assisted by the presence of David Eastman, Peter Baxter and John Lavett who were there at Heard Island in 1947, and ranging through to expeditioners who had been south this last summer.

With our Master of Ceremonies stalwart David Ellyard, we were entertained with a lively program of entertaining and informative speakers. We were especially honoured by Club President, Malcolm Kirton, who spoke of the changing future for the Club and the upcoming 50-year anniversary. Malcolm also proposed the toast to the women and men of ANARE, how interesting in that order! Michael Tomkins our most recent winterer, Macquarie Island 1998, responded with an acknowledgment of the efforts of club members in developing the ANARE tradition and noting continuing interest amongst the current generation of expeditioners to observe those traditions. Membership Officer Max Corry and Secretary Chris Gamgee were also part of the Melbourne delegation, we hope they noted the enthusiasm of the Branch and the real interest in participating in the wider Club activity.

Our special guest was manhauler extraordinaire Peter Treseder. Peter gave us a lively audio visual presentation of the trials and tribulations of the 1997/98 walk from the Weddell Sea to the Pole. With fellow team members Keith Brown and Ian Williams, three sledge loads of 150 kg each were hauled 1400 km, the distance from Sydney to Melbourne, in temperatures down to -40 degrees. The

team took an interesting approach to calorific intake with a routine addition of copious quantities of olive oil to breakfast cornflakes! All present were in awe when Peter proudly displayed the famous Mawson balaclava, soon to be reunited with the Mawson Antarctic Collection, for display in Adelaide. A second item Peter showed was a piece of Walrus tusk carved by Amundsen's cook and which had made the trip to the Pole in 1911. Inspired by men of Sir Douglas Mawson's character Peter sought to inspire the youth of Australia with a positive image to counteract all the negativity that is prevalent, he wants to make a difference to them and introduce the concept of responsible risk taking.

A brief report on the state of Mawson's huts was given by Geoff Ashley of the AAP Expedition, from when he first observed the beautifully designed huts in 1996, through the stabilisation process initiated in 1997 and to the present state of affairs. It is proposed there will be a follow up expedition in 2000/2001. The long running debate among ANARE Club members was sparked into life yet again!

As usual our raffle was well supported with another sponsorship cheque guaranteed to Taronga Zoo and "our" Leopard seal "Georgia". Yarning and seeking out old mates continued right up to midnight when the party moved into the electric atmosphere of the hotels bars with a very late night ensuring for those who only had to catch the lift up to their dongas.

Next years Sydney Midwinter 2000 will again be held in Parramatta, at the famous Sydney football club, Parramatta Leagues, on Saturday June 24 2000. Why not plan for a Midwinter cruise up the Parramatta River. Are you on the NSW mailing list? See the Branch website for all the details.

Lucinda and Col