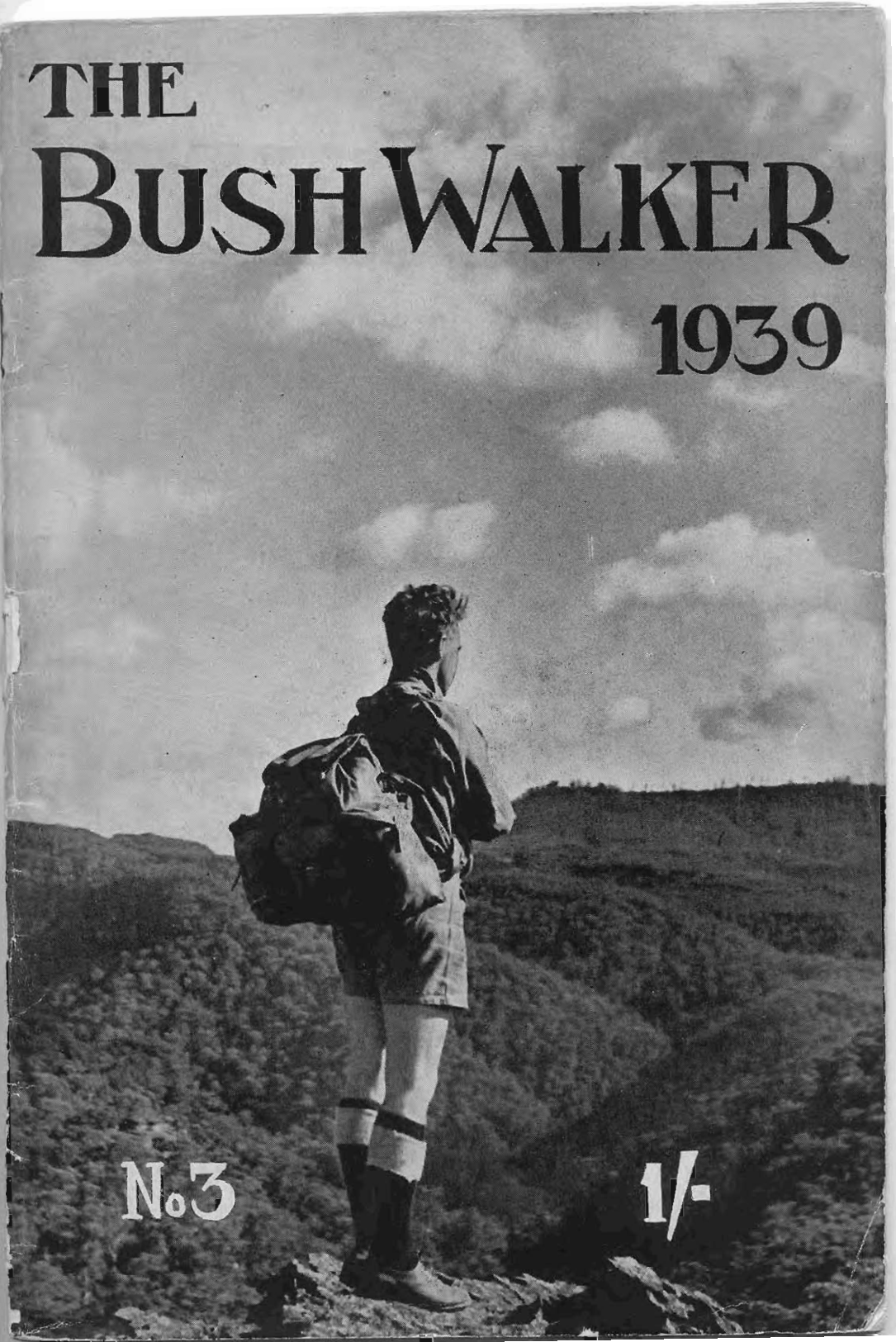
THE BUSH WALKER

1939



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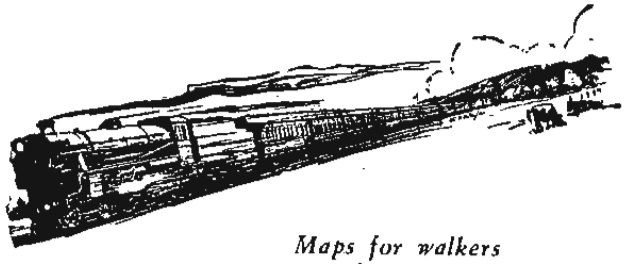

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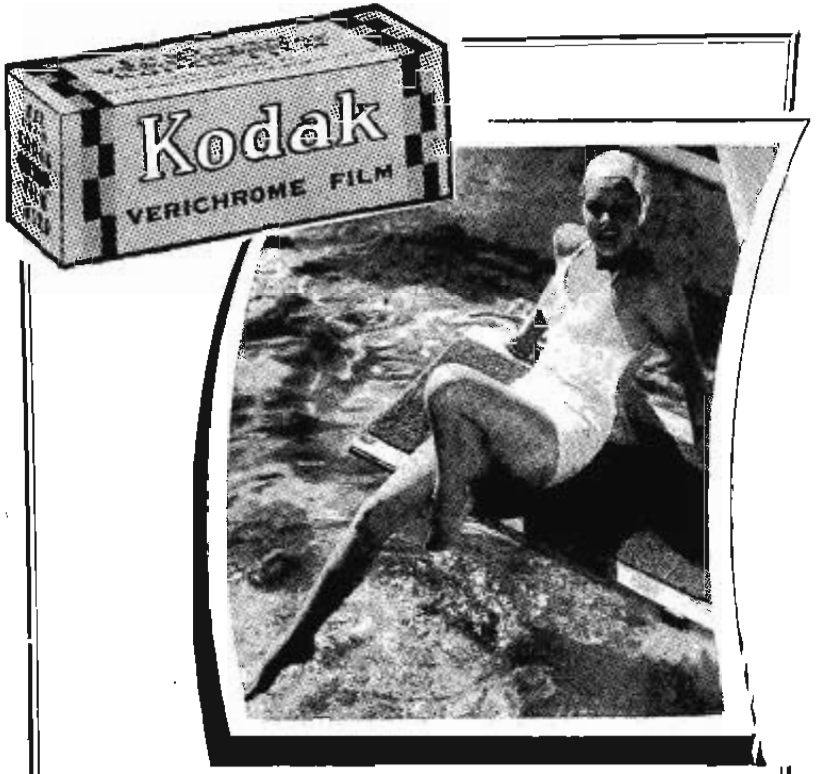

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THE BUSH WALKER

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OUR POSITION IN WAR-TIME

WE had another article prepared for this page. Between ourselves, we thought it quite a good one in the more or less normal times in which it was written.

But on the 3rd September, just as we were ready to go to press, times ceased to be normal. On that day, Australia, together with approximately one-fourth of the peoples of the world, became involved in a struggle, the end of which no man can see. It may be a matter of weeks, of months, or of years. We are confident of the ultimate outcome, but do not dare to hazard a guess as to how or when it will come about, or what changes will take place in the meantime.

The immediate question which confronted the bush walking movement, in common with the rest of the community, was: "What is our position in the altered circumstances which now face us?" There were three clear premises upon which the logical consideration of the matter could proceed.

In the first place, the demands of national service must be paramount. Every one of us must be prepared to make personal sacrifices we would never contemplate at other times. Careers and ambitions must become of secondary importance; the pastimes and hobbies that play such a large part in our enjoyment of life will have to be relegated, for the nonce, more and more into the background.

Secondly, there must be no panic. The best means of assuring this is to maintain the ordinary life of the community so far as possible. It is inevitable that changes will come. Many of us, as individuals, must be prepared for them to come with unavoidable suddenness: but, collectively, it is our duty to see that there is as little departure from normality as the extraordinary circumstances of the moment will permit.

Thirdly, recreation is no less essential in war-time than in peace. It is just as important in its own way as is the work of, say, the Red Cross. The unfit nation is well on the road to defeat. As time passes, people will have less leisure, but this only emphasises the necessity to make the most of such opportunities as arise. What better tonic can there be for harassed, war-jaded nerves than that provided by Mother Nature?

Consideration of these fundamentals led us to the conclusion that it was desirable that we should carry on, unless and until anything now unexpected might alter the position. However, we fully realise that, as time passes, the more pressing needs of the nation will make it necessary to curtail many of our activities. Already many of our members have been called up for Army, Navy and Air Force duty: others are finding that, even now, the extra demands of their ordinary occupations are shortening their spare time. But even a mere skeleton organisation is better than none.

It is in the belief that we can best do our bit by keeping going that we present the third number of this magazine exactly as it had been prepared before the outbreak of war, with the exception of this one page only. We hope that it will enable the reader to forget for a space the besetting cares of the world, and carry him in spirit away to the perfect peace of the bush.

For the N.S.W. Federation of Bush Walking Clubs:

C. D'A. ROBERTS,

Honorary Secretary.

BEAUTY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

LAMINGTON NATIONAL PARK

BY DOROTHY HASLUCK
(The Sydney Bush Walkers)

THE beauties of Lamington National Park are so many and so varied that one scarce knows where to begin in describing them.

Marvellous panoramic views vie with the exquisite beauty of waterfalls and the towering magnificence of stately trees. I have always thought New Zealand had wonderful trees, but, though a good New Zealander, I must give the palm to those of Queensland. The Antarctic Beeches are from 2,000 to 3,000 years old, a feature of them being that they have a mass of roots about five feet above the ground, the land having at some time receded that depth. Some of the figs we measured were 52 feet round the base of the trunk, while enormous elkhorn, staghorn and bird's-nest ferns found a resting place on the branches in great profusion.

I think one of the most interesting trips I did from Binna Burra was the Lower Coomera Gorge, said to be the most beautiful waterfall trip in Australia. Accompanied by Tarzan, the guide—so-called because of his propensity for swinging from tree to tree (of course, one need not follow him in these little escapades)—I set off about 9.30. Tarzan, by the way, seemed to have a bad opinion of "Sydney Hikers," as he called them, as, when asked to take me this trip, he said he would take me down but he did not know about taking me up the 800ft. cliff on the return journey. After a four-mile walk on tracks, we climbed down into the gorge and proceeded up the river, jumping from rock to rock, developing goat-like propensities, as the rocks were very slippery. Some of Tarzan's leaps were nearly my undoing, but, with the prestige of the S.B.W. to maintain, I managed to remain upright. The Raining Falls soon came into view. It is almost impossible to describe the beauty of these with full sunlight upon them—falling 50 yards wide in a soft, gauze-like curtain, hundreds of feet from an overhanging cliff displaying many beautiful colours on its face.

Down a Deep Gorge

Wending our way onward toward the Main Coomera Falls, the last miles passed through a gorge between cliffs 50 yards apart, which rise 800 feet, terminating at the foot of the lower falls. The upper part falls down a crevice 340 feet and is hidden, the sun shining on them for ten minutes of the day only. To see these one has to climb down by the aid of a rope, roots and branches, the weather having to be fine, as it is dangerously slippery.

Tearing ourselves away from the fascination of the ever-changing lights on the falling waters, we started off for our luncheon place. By this time Tarzan had apparently revised his opinion of Sydney walkers, as he pointed to the cliffs and said, "That is where we go up." It certainly looked rather formidable, but was not as bad as it looked. When we were about half-way up and in a rather awkward position, Tarzan on a narrow ledge and just about to climb round a nasty corner, put his hand almost on an outsize in black snakes. He sprang back and, to my alarmed gaze, appeared to be going right over the edge, which here had a sheer drop of hundreds of feet. However, he managed to retain his balance, the snake having meanwhile disappeared into the growth over which we had to climb —not a very cheerful prospect. Still, when we glanced below, retreat looked less inviting; so, in true bush-walker style, on we went without, I am glad to say, any further attentions from the snake. Near the top, after some rock climbing which took a little careful manoeuvring, we climbed on to a point from which we commanded a magnificent view right down the gorge 800 feet below and away over miles of country. From there we traversed the edge of the gorge—very rough, but beautiful—to the crevice and then home, having spent a most interesting day.

Walking with Bernard O'Reilly

After staying a week at Binna Burra, I walked across to O'Reilly's, a distance of 14 miles, via the Main Border Track, which passes through rain forest of great beauty. Lunching at one of the lookouts on Mt. Merrino at a height of 3,760 feet, we had a most wonderful panoramic view of the whole of the northern rivers of N.S.W. There were numbers of lyre-birds, their rich, full notes echoing from point to point. They are known as the Albert lyre-bird and have not the lyre-shaped tail such as those of N.S.W. have.

We arrived at O'Reilly's about 3.45. A glorious view, taking in Mts. Barney and Lindsay, stretching out to the west, met our gaze. The next morning I saw one of the most exquisite sunrises over this vista I have ever seen. The most interesting trip I did from here was to Lamington Plateau. Bernard O'Reilly, two boys and I started off at 2.30 one afternoon. Following ridges for eight miles down to the valley, we arrived at the Stevens' bull house in which we were to camp, I devoutly hoping there would not be a dispute between us and the bull in regard to possession. On proceeding to get tea, we discovered we had forgotten to bring the mugs and milk, but an obliging farmer, happening along, said he would supply us with both. Much joy on my part, as I hate tea without milk. Alas! my joy was short-lived, as on his return with the milk, in the course of conversation, he said he was not feeling very well and hoped he was not getting the measles, as the baby had them. Our varying expressions can well be imagined, and my interest in milk evaporated.

Climb to Point Lookout

The next day we rose bright and early (on inspection, there were no spots to be seen), as we were to leave our packs and do the 28 miles to the plateau and back in the day. After we reached Xmas Creek, down which Westray went on his fated journey, Bernard O'Reilly decided to take us

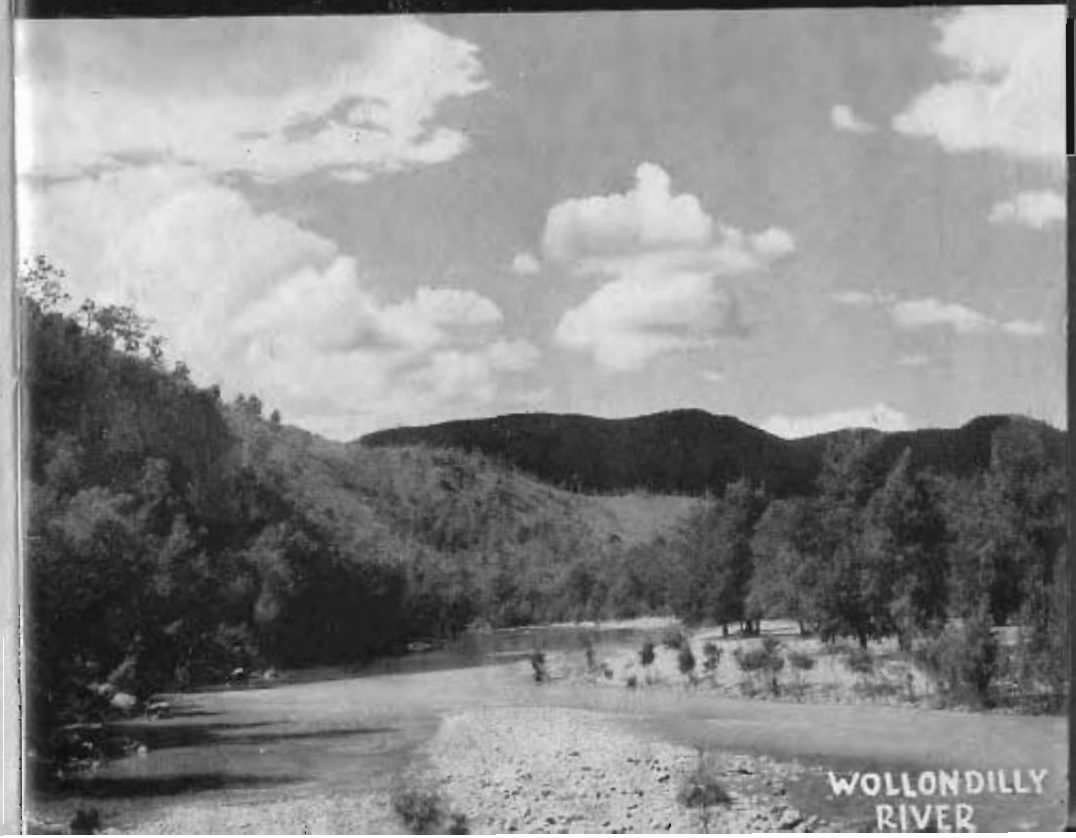
up the bed of the creek instead of the track, as he had not been up since the crash. Jumping from rock to rock and climbing round and over waterfalls, we went almost to the head; the wild loveliness of the creek, with its numbers of cascading waterfalls, absolutely enthralling me, so that distance was as nothing. Near the top we started to climb up towards Point Lookout—a pretty steep climb of about 1,000 feet, with lawyer and every other clutching vine liberally matted through the bush. Being in shorts, my legs were very much the worse for wear at the finish, but the view which met our sight on arrival more than rewarded us for our efforts. Two thousand feet below us was the Tweed Valley, numerous peaks in the changing light and shade making a picture which Gruner has captured so wonderfully in his painting, "The Valley of the Tweed."

As it was now getting late, we reluctantly turned campward, wending our way down a very rough track and passing the remains of the Stinson —very little of which remains—and Westray's grave, all embedded with orchids planted by Rose O'Reilly. When one sees the roughness of the country and the denseness of the scrub, one must pay tribute to all those who were engaged in the rescue of the survivors of the crash.

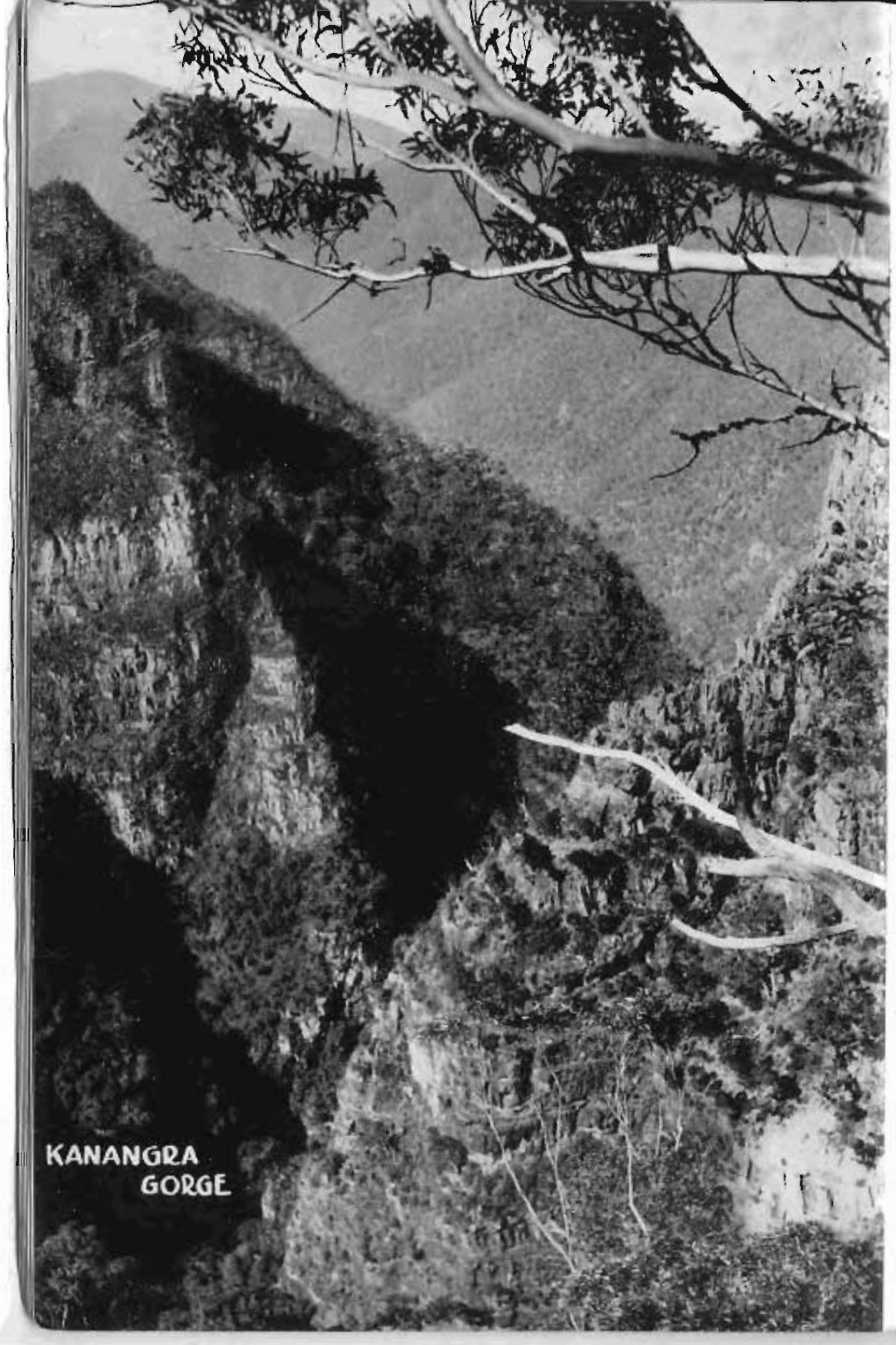
In the morning we started on the return journey, climbing all the way, and on arriving at the top met a farmer who, on seeing me open my pack for something, said: "Just the sort of thing a woman would do —take her whole blasted wardrobe with her." What he would have said of some of the packs belonging to members of the Sydney Bush Walkers I could mention, I don't know. Methinks his remarks would have been very potent.

To me, Lamington Park is one of the loveliest places I have seen, and although I walked 250 miles, it is so extensive and there are so many places to explore, that I don't suppose I saw more than a quarter of it. However, who knows what the future may bring forth? There may be another time.

COASTLINE FROM ERA



WOLLONDILLY RIVER


KANANGRA GORGE

OURSELVES AND NATURE

By MACHIN HALL

(The Warrigal Club of N.S.W.)

THE attitude of Australians towards nature has never been static, but has developed with the growth of national consciousness. A continuous development of ideas and sentiment has taken place during the hundred and fifty years of our existence. Nor is the process yet complete. The feeling of imprisonment—at first by law and later by mountain barriers—was the first note in the outlook of the infant colony. When this passed in the 'twenties of last century, the days of early explorations, the country remained to the early pioneers an alien land with alien timbers and forbidding landscape. Sturdily with stout hearts they hewed and felled the encumbering forest, and hailed the discovery of open, grassed country with a delight that was almost pathetic. Homes were surrounded with European trees and shrubs in a vain attempt to recapture English forms and colours. Running in their veins was—

"The love of field and coppice,
Of green and shaded lanes,
Of ordered woods and gardens."

England had behind her two thousand years of knowledge and experience of nature, with a strong sentimental tinge: ours had yet to be built up. A scientific fervour brought to our shores a noble company of botanists, geologists, explorers and students of bird and animal lore. Men like Cunningham, Leichhardt, Strzelecki, von Mueller, Gould, Maiden, David, and a host of others have left their names enshrined in our place names and scientific nomenclature. Their investigations, free from purely sentimental attachment to the scenes of old Europe, laid the foundations of our bush patriotism.

Australian Nationalism

The quickening of sentimental regard for the new land gave us the Australian national movement of the days of our fathers and ourselves. A grand chain of poets and novelists, of story writers and balladists, developed an intense pride in our people, plants, birds and animals, revelling in our warm sunshine, and the peculiar beauties of Australian scenes, which shook from us the old feeling of inferiority. The Australian school of landscape painters completed the revolution of our attitude to our unique surroundings. Conscious of our new-found mountains, beaches and streams, we became enthusiastic exponents of the new Australian nationalism. Then came the war, when half a million young Australians, unashamedly homesick amid the elms and poppies of Europe, yearned for their bright hued trees, sunshine, and open spaces. Life away from these treasured memories seemed for them the most refined of tortures.

Our walking movement is of this later age, but are we conscious of being part of a dynamic movement? Are we feeling the obligations which this consciousness implies? What is the meaning of our club-land with its petty jealousies and trivial discussions? A greater sense of mission is required amongst us all. Let me confess that I was moved to join a club by the chance remark of a walking cobber:

"The bush has given us a lot: we owe it something in return."

I would not have it thought that I look upon the majority of the walking fraternity as aesthetic Philistines. If they were, they would not be spending their energies tracking the wilds. But no tradition existed to stand as background to our movement. Literature, indeed, is rich with essays on the joys of the open air, from Hazlitt to Stevenson and Thoreau. But these write more of the open road, and the inn fireside, than of the splendid outlook, the trackless ridge and the starlit camp. Ours is a

different life. We meet no stolid peasant at an unexpected turn of the track, although we may share a billy of tea with a Kowmung cattle man. What would R.L.S. have given for such an experience, and how entrancingly would he have written of it?

The Spirit of Idealism

An urge of secret mysticism is amongst us, an inarticulate feeling of oneness with the infinite. For is not the message of the starlit night only read aright by him who sleeps afield? Our Clear Hills, Cloudmakers, Splendour Points and Kanangra Lookouts are but symbols of our faith, which awe us into silence. Dull is he of soul who is not stricken into silence for a moment on such eminences. Our pleasant small talk (so indispensable in any out-of-doors cobber) falls from us with our packs. These splendid points of ours we try to fix eternally in our memories, for only in brief holiday highlights, for a few short years, we tread the perilous peaks of joy. Perhaps this is why we photograph so frantically, only to throw away the negatives after the usual display to our friends. For whoever was really satisfied with a picture of one of his Pisgah outlooks?

What though they are of lower stature than Rockies or Himalayas? It is not height, but the dramatic element in landscape, that really captures our imaginations. Our mountains, as we know them, have that quality of rugged abruptness which makes a morning at Kanangra, or a night at the foot of some towering bluff, more moving than more far-famed and harder sought landscapes. I believe our gallant company live for the spirit and recollected emotions of such moments. Sombrely, without many words, the hard-sought heights are left behind and the plunge is taken to the less austere pleasures of the stream-side camp.

Bush Walkers' Ambitions

But to come back to my friend's remark: "We owe the bush something in return." The preservation of our near mountains for the youth of all times is the best return we can make.

Our aesthetic equipment for this task is no doubt sound enough. The least of us knows how to worship in the great cathedral of the out-of-doors. Artistic pictorial photographers abound. Experts in geology, botany, topography, map making, land tenures and bushcraft are to be found in our ranks. But club discussions of trips accomplished and routes taken, with all that endearing prattle of little things engross too much of the proceedings of club meetings. An army of men and women with a scientific speciality is the goal, if the walking movement is to be a voice of authority and a powerful influence on public opinion. The bush lives for us just in the measure that we bring knowledge and trained observation to it. Every club worthy of the name should have a small library on scientific lines. A Federation library is worthy of consideration. To acquire self-training is possible to most of us. Experts, perhaps, we cannot be; but the movement should develop more and more members with some interpretative knowledge of rocks and geological formations. Information about common tree species, a desire to collect and propagate some varieties of plants, knowledge of wild flowers, ferns and orchids, should become more general. The acquisition of at least a smattering of bird and animal lore is not beyond most of us. Sad to relate, clubmen still carry guns in the bush, unmoved even by the cynical utilitarian principle that "the gun is not worth its weight in bacon." The pocket lens, the camera and field glasses—heavy and inedible—must take the place of the rifle. A steady pressure must come from every one of us to preserve all that crawls, runs, flies or grows.

When we are united in planned idealism, with deeper and wider knowledge, our influence will be the greater. A consciousness that we are the culmination of a national movement may help towards the realisation of hitherto dimly realised aspirations.

Night

They were asleep, those people in the tent, three curled green forms with the sleepy firelight playing over them. I was awake.

The fire was a glowing pile of embers. The trees stood darkly around. High above, the leaves made the finest tracery against the starlit sky. The cliffs were black. Silence! No stir in the trees, no move from the fire. And then! A silver shaft shot through the trees. Oh! The world has turned to silver and grey. Silver tree-trunks, grey shadows, tiny leaves shining mistily, and the cliffs black against the sky—the moonlit sky.

With a gracious smile the Silver Queen acknowledges her subjects, then rides high on her way, growing serenely aloof. A 'possum scurries away at my feet and an owl hoots. All the little creatures of the bush are about, hunting, courting, busy in the moonlight. And you queer green things in yonder tent? You! Ah! You sleep.

SINGAJINGAWEL

BY DOROTHY LAWRY

(Sydney Bush Walkers. The H.H. Club)

APPARENTLY it is high time that the origin of this name was recorded. Recently the founder of one of the younger walking clubs said to me: "I think 'Singajingawel' is the most musical and pleasing of all the aboriginal place-names I have heard; don't you?"

"Sorry," I replied, "but it is *not* aboriginal. It is a corruption of 'Sing-a-jingle-well,' and it was so named by my friends, the Taylors, in October, 1930."

This is the story of the naming:

In October, 1927, Evan Taylor, his wife, Dorothea, and I set out to try to clamber on to, and over, Mt Solitary, but the fourth member of our party became ill on the Saturday night and had to rest on Sunday morning, and Evan stayed in camp to look after him. Dorothea and I just took a light lunch and explored up the "Knife-edge" and along the top of the mountain, finding water in two creeks before we turned back to camp. We all returned to Katoomba across the Jamieson Valley.

Our second attempt on Mt. Solitary was made on the Eight-hour Week-end in October, 1930, when Evan's sister, Dorothy R. Taylor, took the place of the man who had been ill.

Between these two trips our small group of walkers, "The Wraggle-taggle Gypsies," had scattered to the ends of the earth, literally; the Sydney Bush Walkers had been formed; and I had joined it and had obtained from the club a little songbook which contained many old favourites. On the 1930 trip I took this book, as Dorothy was one of our "Wraggle-taggle" songsters, and she sang to us most of the way along the old tram-track such "jingles" as "Some Folks," "Funiculi Funicula," etc., etc.

The Actual Naming

We clambered up the Knife-edge, crossed the knob of Mt. Korrowall, passed the big cave, proceeded along the top of the mountain, saw—and named—"Squirm Cliff," and camped in the hidden valley at the eastern end of the mountain. This was a pleasant camp, with more singing, and, when we had to return there for the second night because we could not get down on to Korrowall Buttress, Dorothy decided we must name the camp-site and the valley; she suggested "Sing-a-jingle-well," which we adopted. On the same day we had named "Point Repulse" above the Buttress, but I do not think that name has become generally known like Singajingawel.

Nowadays bush walkers dash over Mt. Solitary and do the trip from Katoomba to Wentworth Falls, or vice versa, in a short week-end, which seems a pity, for there is a surprising variety of country in the three or four square miles of that mountain-top, and many happy hours can be spent in exploring the various small valleys.

In 1930 and 1931 there were fewer walkers and much less knowledge of the country available, so, as one who had actually been over Mt. Solitary, I was frequently asked for directions. Naturally, I always mentioned the best camp-site, in the hidden valley of "Sing-a-jingle-well," on the best of the three creeks in which one could be fairly sure of finding water.

Mrs. Taylor and I certainly were not the first people to get on to Mt. Solitary. There were very faint signs of a track up the Knife-edge in October, 1927, and the first thing we saw when we reached the top was an empty sardine tin! Someone had eaten sardines on a mountain that was reputed to be waterless!!

TOURIST HOSTELS IN REMOTE AREAS

VICTORIAN PROPOSALS

BY L.G.H.

VISITING Melbourne earlier in the year, I discovered that the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau is striving to extend the facilities for those people who, having experienced holidays at conventional tourist resorts, are eager to explore the more remote areas of the State. The outstanding feature of the Bureau's proposals is the erection of a chain of tourist hostels in the mountainous region surrounding Mt Wellington, which is becoming increasingly popular with walkers and trail riders.

By means of organised skyline tours over the Christmas-New Year holiday periods, the Bureau has revealed to many hundreds of enthusiastic riders and walkers the attractions of the Central Gippsland area, which has been aptly described as "the place where the hiker's dreams always come true."

I understand that the Bureau has recommended that the Government construct seven hostels along a mountain route covering a round trip of 87 miles from Castle Burn Creek, via the Eagle Peaks, Valley of the Moroka, Mt. Wellington, and Tali Karng to Joanba, a grazier's out-station on the Avon River. The rail approach is by way of Stratford, 138 miles from Melbourne, and on the return journey the train would be joined at Tinamba, 127 miles from Melbourne. A road journey 245 miles to and from the starting and finishing points of the hostel route would be involved.

Details of Proposed Hostels

Sketches of the proposed hostels which were shown to me contemplate the erection of buildings providing ideal facilities. Accommodation would be provided in each hostel for 20 men and 10 women. The equipment would consist of sleeping bunks, meal room with a large fireplace, firewood, water supply, conveniences and other services which would add immeasurably to the comfort of a tour through the region selected, without detracting from the natural atmosphere and remoteness of the route.

These hostels would be supervised by a travelling ranger, who would be appointed to conduct parties over the route, ensure that the hostels are kept clean, maintain supplies of firewood and water, and generally supervise the various properties.

All people using the hostels would be required to pay a relatively small fee, and the bookings would be made through the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau. In the event of tourists arriving unannounced, or in bad weather, the hostels would, of course, be available to them, as they would be unlocked. Finally, the Bureau suggests that the hostels be vested in and controlled by the Victorian State Tourist Resorts Committee. The Committee would be aided by the co operation of the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs, which, I understand, is enthusiastic regarding the proposal.

This brief outline of the Bureau's plans will, I feel sure, be of great interest to walkers in New South Wales, who will share with me the hope that the scheme will be carried out. This scheme, it is hoped, will be merely the forerunner of a series of similar hostels in other parts of a State which is rich in remote areas that fulfil the highest expectations of walkers.

Romance

WE had ambled up from Carlons' along an unnamed ridge and wandered through the sunlit bush. No breeze stirred the leaves: the sunbeams were too lazy to dance. Somewhere a lyre-bird called. We listened. His last, rich note had ended and we were moving on when someone noticed a stone fire-place. It had obviously belonged to a hut. Strange! Here was another! Stone fire-places scattered through the young bush.

Large fire-places and small there were. One, a huge fellow, proudly indicating the two stone steps which had marked his front door; another, clinging lopsidedly to the slope, cringing before his lordly neighbour. Here a sapling, past its early youth, grew against the stone. Beneath him were a few pieces of rusted iron.

Tiny tracks seemed to connect these erections. Or was it a trick? Everywhere the bush had claimed the land. Did I imagine the paths? Paths where people once walked back and forth between the fire-places: miners with blackened faces; women worn and faded with the toil of a hard life; children, bright-eyed and laughing, caring for nought save to scramble among the hills, chasing 'possums and lizards, or playing wild games of bushrangers, who might really be lurking anywhere around the corner. So they lived, these people of the fire-places, and so they went, slowly as the coal in yonder hill gave out. They went and the bush came shyly back again, claiming its own, and the stream that must once have watered their homes is silted with sand and rubble. Only the stone hearths stand, fiercely resistant, waiting. . . .

WHERE CLEAR STREAMS FLOW

BY FRANK A. CRAFT
(The Warrigal Club of N.S.W.)

NO one who has seen the streams of the Kosciusko highlands can forget them. The crystal water glides over pebbles in the shallows, or runs beneath peat banks with shrubs and grass trailing in the water. Rising on the slopes of the highest points of the continent, these streams are hidden by snow in winter, but in summer they sparkle and run past the tors of many a granite hill on the way to the gorges which form their gateways to the plains.

My first approach to this country was made from the Monaro side, through the valleys of the Eucumbene and the Upper Murrumbidgee. Yaouk Hill, Adaminaby, Jindabyne, Kiandra—these proved the deceptiveness of space in the clear air. Hills that were ten or twelve miles away looked to be within an hour's walk. The ridges towards Kosciusko, each in a different tint of blue, were terminated by the rolling crests of Munyang Range, with a capping of newly-fallen snow. Even the highest points looked close at hand as they shone with deceptive serenity in the autumn light.

A couple of years later I had the opportunity of passing over the Murray country a few miles farther to the west. It is buttressed on the outer side by a high scarp which must be crossed in any traverse from the Murray to the high crests. The rise is so quick that one may readily go from the alpine to the sub-tropical within a few hours. Two of us had camped at the foot of Jagungal, the "crouching lion," where we shivered in front of the camp fire and watched a ring of grass fires burning near the head swamps of Tooma River to the south-west; a light wavered past the fire line like a will-o'-the-wisp. The dying fires sprang into fresh life in its track—some belated stockman was doubtless carrying on the burning, but we saw no sign of him afterwards.

Rugged Grandeur

Next day we climbed Jagungal. The few snow gums in exposed places were bent horizontal by the westerlies, and the basalt crags of the summit had been split by lightning. Away towards Dargals, on the western edge of the plateau, the country looked absolutely bare and desolate beneath the clouds—Tibet rather than Australia; "World's End," the gorge by which Tooma River finally crosses the highland scarp, was a gash to the north. Later in the day, after the passage of the high plateau, we followed the steep track leading down to Khancoban station and the Murray. Tall ash trees appeared; there were tree ferns by the streams; with each step the heat and dust increased. By sunset we were down on the plains, a mere thousand feet above the sea; then there was dusk, and a powdery track for mile after mile; then black velvet darkness, faint stars, the sound of cattle in the fields, and a ploughed road mile after mile—

A week or so after Jagungal we saw the Pilot rising from the heath and swamp of the Indi country. Wild dogs, yellow or black, were to be seen both singly and in pairs; there was the skeleton of a brumby on a rocky crest, and we disturbed small herds of these animals, some like the domestic horse, but most of the true brumby grey. All were in fine condition. The following evening we camped on a bare hillside above the head of Thredbo River amongst tussocks of snow grass. At five thousand feet, in autumn, the stars were bright as a crescent moon, but the intense radiation made us curl like blackfellows around small fires. Past the

crest of Kosciusko is the track down Hannel's Spur to the enclosed valley of Swampy Plain River at Geehi. We located the head of the track at sunset, and had a breakneck trot down it which brought us a mile closer to sea-level.

There is only one way of learning the country in detail: to pass it yard by yard and hill by hill. Winter snow on the highlands, the fires which scorch in dry summers, the fallen snow gum and ash trees, the fire-killed coppice like a hedge of bayonets, the wild raspberry on the river banks above Geehi—all these add to the difficulties of mountainous terrain and lumpy plateaux. Yet the uplands are glorious on a bright summer morning after frost. The deep blue of the sky, the lighter enamelled blue of the river, the brown and purple heaths, the steep hillsides with wild-flowers, give an exaltation of spirit which is completed by the bracing air.

Through the World's End

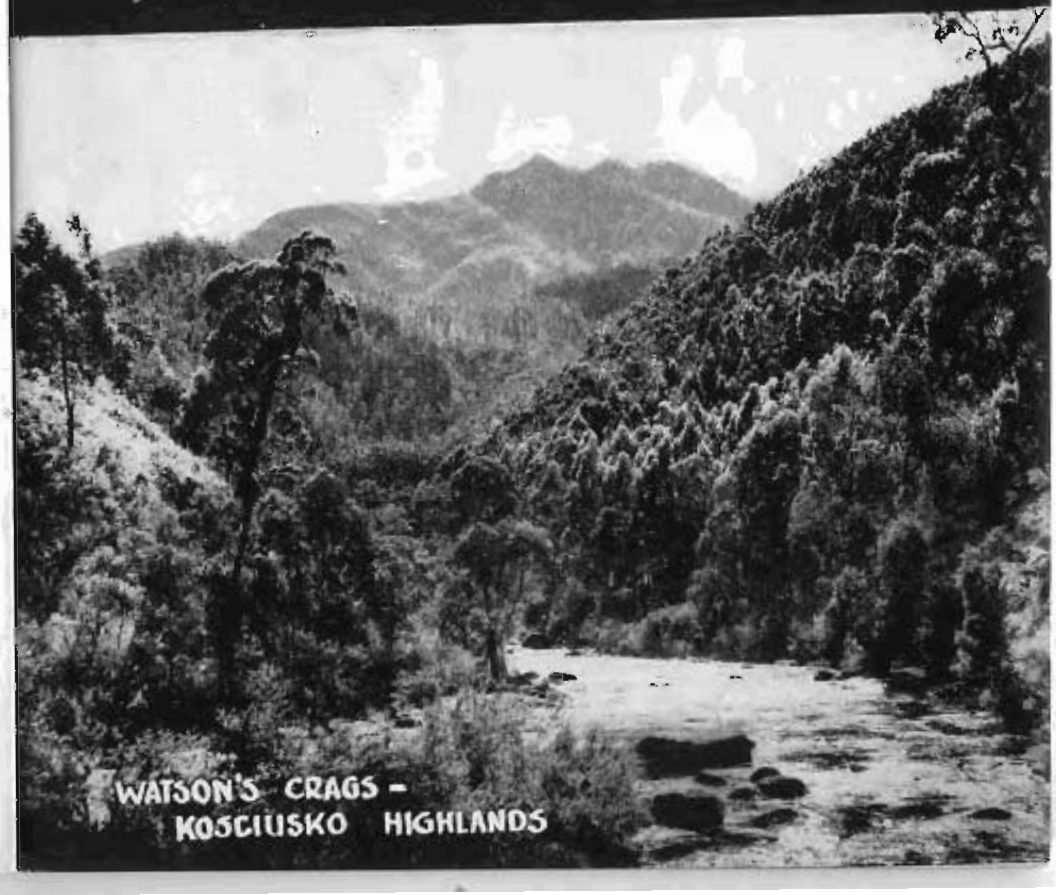
For some years we passed into the highlands by tracks, or ridges, or short-cuts across the gorges, but toward the end of last year the World's End proved too strong an attraction to be resisted, so we decided to try it. By evil fortune the passage of the lesser canyon, which is the approach to World's End from the lowland side, was made during part of the great heat wave: the smoke of incendiary fires was in the air and every step was a privation. The actual traverse through the great gorge took only a day, but it was a day of constant effort against rocks, cascades and heat.

It soon became clear that wading and river crossing were going to be the order of things. Cliffs came down to the water in places and the river bed was strewn with granite boulders which would have defied all the efforts of Ajax to lift them, and the current swirled amongst them clear and cold, despite the heat. In one place a waterfall had to be passed by means of a fig tree growing against a cliff: just upstream a boulder section had logs flung about in all directions. Farther still there was no alternative to wading in midstream, clinging to boulders with both hands whilst the water raced past waist deep. The reaches were a relief from the noise and strife of the rapids, but there were long stretches of wading, jumping from boulder to boulder, with crossing after crossing. The river bed rose eight hundred feet in six miles!

Late in the afternoon we came to a series of deep pools, each of which was enclosed by a cliff. Impassable rapids led into these bogey holes, and crossings had to be made at the lower ends of the pools, where the current rushed fiercely past hollow cliffs. Soon afterwards we came to a slightly wider part of the gorge to find a tiny space of ground between flood-drifted logs, the first possible camping place since early morning. A large stream came in on the right bank: we had reached Ogilvie's Creek and the World's End had been passed. Thence we climbed to the uplands by a favourable ridge and made our way back to Tooma by the regular track, moving only in the mornings and camping early in order to avoid the worst of the heat. Down in the valleys were smoke, flies, dust, and oppressive heat—even the edges of the highlands were invisible: but the last sight of Tooma River as we crossed the suspension bridge at Possum Point showed us the same clear, cold water that we had seen gliding along in the drak upland channels, or swirling through the gorges on its way to the parched lowlands.

The Publicity Bureau which was formed last year has done an amazing lot for the cause of bush walking and to acquaint the general public with the nature of the Federation's work. During the year many lectures have been given to outside bodies, and the Bureau is always anxious to hear of those willing to give lectures and of bodies which would like a night's instructive entertainment on bush walking matters. Mr. Horace Salmon is the Director of the Bureau, and all enquiries and offers of assistance should be sent to him at 86 Charles Street, Ryde.

MISTS FROM TI WILLA



WATSON'S CRAGS -
KOSCIUSKO HIGHLANDS

SWIMMING THE KOWMUNG

OLD JOADJA

SWIMMING THE KOWMUNG

By CLARE KINSELLA
(The Sydney Bush Walkers)

WHEN I was asked in December, 1938, to join a party to spend Christmas and New Year on the Kowmung, I accepted with alacrity. The summer was exceptionally hot. I was tired of the city, and I visualised lazy days of loafing on grassy banks, reading, sleeping and chatting, interspersed with frequent swims. But I had reckoned without my hosts, "the Tigers." I might have known that they would not be content to lie in gentle amity with the lamb. Their plan was to follow the Kowmung from its source to its junction with the Cox, and I was blissfully unaware that this had not before been "done" at river level by women.

My first shock was the food. My pack was filled to bursting point, but I reflected that, after all, one does expect to eat a little more during the festive season, and cheerfully shouldered my burden.

Fifteen of us set out from Katoomba early on 24th December and drove out past Ginkin. Christmas Day was spent on the Kowmung eating, resting and exploring Hollander's Gorge and Chardon Canyon, and at 6.45 a.m. on Boxing Day the trip proper began. The morning's walk took us through easy though uninteresting country, but later the river broadened and we lunched at Tuglow Hole Creek by a fine pool where we swam and sun-baked. After lunch, we picked our way over rocks and through scrub and came to the first canyon, where we either had to swim or go over the top

Transport Difficulties

We each had a small surf float to take our pack, but after much puffing and blowing we found that the packs would not balance on them. We then tried making a raft from odd pieces of driftwood, but that too was unsuccessful, so we tied our packs in ground sheets, placed them carefully in the water, and away they went bobbing along with the current, while we swam behind them. Two other great granite-bound pools were negotiated in this way during the afternoon, and at length we came to Morong Falls, where the party divided—some had to return to town. The nine who were left camped on a narrow patch well above the river, amid clumps of the delightful Xerotes or sago plant, whose sharp, sword-like leaf made even more uncomfortable our sloping gravel bed.

We set off very early next morning, hopping, clambering, and hoisting ourselves from boulder to great boulder—giants' toys tossed carelessly into the bed of the river. For a time I felt that I would have given anything to have gone back with the others; I even thought with pleasure of Pitt Street at mid-day and the jostling Christmas crowds. But this mood did not last long, and was banished forever when I managed to negotiate a nasty piece of slippery granite beside a waterfall. "The Tigers" ran down, as much at home as the waterfall itself, but I was so glad to have accomplished it, my spirits soared and did not drop again.

All that day was rock hopping, tying one's pack, pushing it and swimming; untying it, feeling glad it had not tipped and wet the contents —rock hopping again, more swims, and more and more. The heat was appalling. The sun was hot, the air was hot, the rocks were hot, and we were hotter than any of them. The banks of the river were most inhospitable, with boulders, clumps of sago plaut, and the spiked blackthorn. At lunch time we were hard pushed to find a place to sit (we certainly could not lie down), so as soon as we had eaten, we sank back into the water and floated there like rhinoceroses replete after a gorge.

Camped by a Waterfall

During the afternoon the wind grew hotter, the sun was a menacing ball burning in a grey smoke haze, and the river began to run iu a narrow torrent through a gorge of pink granite rocks, serrated and broken. On and on we went, with the hot wind blowing into our faces. At last we stopped at the only possible camp spot—a few odd patches of flat ground above a great pool spilling over into a waterfall. We ate dinner perched on this eyrie, then straight to bed with the tumult of the river singing us to sleep. But mosquitoes, sandflies, and the heat made sound sleep impossible. A thunderstorm broke during the night, but there was little rain.

Next morning, refreshed in body, and with spirits as hilarious as ever, we crossed a granite causeway and clambered along to a small tree, where the packs were lowered. We followed, clambering down the tree to the water, whereupon we wrapped packs and swam a 125-yards pool. Again we had to lower packs and clamber down by degrees or bits. Then more rock hopping or boulder bounding. Sometimes we used one or other of the men as ladders, and climbed up or down over them. Next a fly climb along sloping granite sides, then packs again and another swim. This continned all day, scrub pushing, rock hopping, and those saving swims. That afternoon we came on our first traces of cattle, and gave a loud cheer, for where the cows could go, so could we. Shortly after, we came into comparatively easy country, and left behind the great granite gorges, so difficult to negotiate, but whose magnificence and grandeur had given us a compensating feeling of exultation.

After a loug afternoon, we camped at a most delightful spot where the river bent in a wide sweep around a tiny island crowded with dwarf casuarinas—a place of peace and beauty, and we slept soundy without the noise of rushing water in our ears.

Another Long Swim

A soft rain was falling next morning as we followed a cattle pad along the green hanks—for the first time unaccompanied by flies. About 11 o'clock we came to the formidable part of the journey—a long canyon which the previous party had decided not to attempt. The rocks ran like flying buttresses into the water, and one couldn't see what was ahead. We decided to find out. We lowered packs, then jumped after them—there was no possibility of clambering down. The water was warm and pleasant and we found plenty of resting places. Except that the swim was comparatively long, the canyon was quite easy to accomplish. Unfortunately many of the packs were wet from being in the water so long. On coming to a grassy hank, fires were lit to dry the gear whilst we ate a stupendous meal.

The character of the river was now changed—no more gorges and rushing waters, granite boulders and towering cliffs, but a peaceful stream rnnning between banks lined with casuarinas; now bubbling over small pebbles, now spilling into quiet pools. The next great excitement was ice-cream at Church Creek, thoughtfully provided by the men of the party who went into Yerranderie.

More people joined us here to finish the trip, and we had a hilarious New Year's Eve on a teaspoon of wine each.

We followed the Kowmnng down to the Cox, low and sluggish in the fierce mid-summer's heat; tnrned up Cedar Creek, which was perfectly dry for a long way up; a long hot pnll over the Ruined Castle, and on to Katoomba and home.

We had accomplished what we had set out to do, but for a long time I was not quite certain whether I had "done" the Kowmung or the Kowmung had "done for me."

JOADJA MEMORIES

BY R. ELSE MITCHELL
(The Warrigal Club of N.S.W.)

ONE day, many years ago, so the legend says, a man from the outlying districts beyond Mittagong wandered into a hotel in that town during one of his monthly visits. In the bar conversation switched from the weather to crops and wool and all manner of things, and eventually centred on a candle which was burning in the bar. Our friend from outback drew a small piece of dark stone from his pocket and commented that, "these are the only candles we use out my way." He held the stone over the candle flame, and, to the amazement of all, it spluttered and burned. "Witches," and "the devil," several murmured, but our friend took it as a matter of course and, extinguishing the lighted stone, laid it on the bar counter. Curious hands fingered it and voices buzzed and rose to a crescendo while a stranger strolled over and addressed our friend. "Excuse me," he said, picking up the curiosity, "but where did you get this stuff?" "Oh," our friend replied, "there's plenty of that near where I live—out by the Wingecarribee." "Thanks; much obliged," said the stranger, and, pocketing the specimen, he departed. Needless to say, the stone was none other than oil-bearing shale, the richest in Australia, and in it the stranger saw the vision of a new industry.

And there the legend ends, for legend it is to all save the local inhabitants, and notwithstanding that it was puhlished in a newspaper of the time as an authentic record of the finding of kerosene shale at Joadja Creek.

The Birth of an Industry

When the shale was located, with seams of coal, below the sandstone escarpments which crown the valley slopes of Joadja Creek, samples were taken, and by analysis estimated to yield 100 gallons of crude oil to the ton—a most remarkable result. This news was like a magnet—a company was formed to exploit the deposits and ample capital subscribed. Commercial activity soon made its presence felt in the district, and plant and buildings were put under construction. Carpenters, stone masons, labourers and others came to add their quota, and the valley, once peaceful and secluded, resounded to the ring of the axe, the clang of the blacksmith's anvil, and the thud of the mason's chisel and mallet.

A tent village sprang up almost overnight, but gradually gave way to more orderly and dignified habitations. No pains were spared in the planning of the project. It would he a model city in the bnsh and it would be laid out properly. In this site jnst near the creek the residential section would be built, and the streets would be planted with ornamental English trees; and, so that the houses would be decent dwellings, a brick-making plant was erected to manufacture bricks locally. Across the stream on a slight eminence would be the manager's house, and beyond that the school, post office and other semi-official buildings. In the feverish excitement and enthusiasm the plant for the industry itself was not neglected. The retorts were established in another corner of the valley, and chimney stacks and furnaces built nearby. Two bridges were built across the creek, one for ordinary traffic and the other to accommodate the tramway which was to carry the shale from the mine to the retorts. This was extended up the southern side of the valley to the top of the sandstone scarp, so that the refined products could be hauled out by a windlass in wheeled tanks.

Success and Failure

Some time elapsed before the works were ready for production because some of the machinery and other essential plant had to be imported from abroad. Finally, in 1880, production was begun and carried on very efficiently for some years, the coal with which the shale occurs being used to stoke the furnaces. No doubt it was a grand project. Even transport problems fell beneath its momentous and impetuous rush; the 16 miles to Mittagong, the nearest railway town, was spanned by a railway specially constructed in 1882 to carry the finished products to Sydney, and bring back any other goods and merchandise. The industry was hailed by critics of Australia's isolated position as the nation's salvation, and there seemed nothing to hinder its progress. The settlement grew in size, reaching a thousand souls, and all the amenities of town life were provided: the town thrived and men came from all directions looking for work in that busy little valley which a few short years before had been immune from the influences of civilization.

But this industry of dreams was doomed to failure—the activity was short lived. In 1889 the refining works were demolished and moved, but the mining of shale continued till 1899, when industrial troubles caused a temporary closure. Finally in 1904 the mine closed down indefinitely, as the shale was said to be worked out, and the model township was abandoned. And so Joadja faded into the gloomy past and became a place of ghosts where these thirty years the hum and smoke of industry have not been heard or seen.

One or two attempts were made to re-establish the shale oil industry at Joadja, but none of them was on a large scale and all have been abandoned almost as soon as they started. At the present day the valley is a pitiful sight of economic desolation—the influences of nature are beginning to regain their hold, and the chimney stacks poke starkly into the azure sky surrounded by tall graceful gums and unchecked blackberry bushes. The ornamental trees in the residential section have run riot and, as if in shame, hide from worldly gaze the ruined dwellings, no longer neat and tidy, but dilapidated and unkempt. Most of the buildings have weathered and are in ruins: brick walls have collapsed, and roofs blown away, but the chimney stacks still stand as solitary monuments to a lost industry. Recently all iron work and other materials, even to the bell in the school house, were salvaged and taken away, and the outward signs of industry will soon have vanished. Then at last the beauteous silence of nature will reign supreme once more.

Towards the end of last century Kanangra Walls was almost as popular a tourist resort as it is now. The official records reveal that in the year 1889, when Mr. Whalan, a local settler, had permission to act as guide, 92 people visited the Walls. In addition, there were many others who undertook the trip but did not avail themselves of the guide's services.

In the same year the popularity of Kanangra and the publication of numerous articles concerning it in the "Herald" and other newspapers, induced the Department of Mines and Agriculture to investigate the possibility of making a road from the Oberon-Caves Road. Mr. Surveyor Leigh undertook the work and made a most interesting report on the district recommending the construction of a road at a cost of £500. The work was never carried out. In the course of his survey, Leigh came across the famous aboriginal paintings below the Walls and his report states that nearby a native spear and tomahawk were found. This would seem to establish the authenticity of the paintings, which has been questioned from time to time.

Destruction

Because a bird or beast is rare,
Some sportsman marks it down to kill,
And counting any game as fair,
Contrives to make it rarer still.

O homo sapiens, who must
At any cost your trigger pull,
I sometimes think your species just
A little bit too plentiful.

Unrivalled for ruggedness, the Grose River Valley has been a problem throughout the years since Australia was first settled. Efforts to penetrate it were made by Paterson, Caley, Dixon, Govett, Mitchell and Strezlecki, up till 1840, but all failed, and not till 1859 was the valley explored throughout. In that year, a party of Royal Engineers constructed the track, of which traces still remain, in order to ascertain whether the valley held a practicable route for a railway to the west. Their work occupied many months, and in consequence of their report, the railway was built on the main ridge and not up the Grose.

OBTAINING GOOD NEGATIVES

BY OUR PHOTOGRAPHIC EXPERT

REMARKABLE though it may seem to some, there is no magic in photography, nor is there anything magical in negative development, and a little understanding of the technical side of developers and exposure will generally remove the fear and difficulty which trouble so many amateurs.

Exposure of Negative

Many people are apt to say that correct exposure is a fetish, and that in an endeavour to procure this all other factors are neglected. Others claim that nothing can be done unless the manufacturer's exposure rating is adhered to rigidly, whether the results are desirable or not. Both views are overstatements. With single negatives—plates, film packs, etc., which are of reasonable size (2¼in. x 3¼in. or larger), faults in exposure can be corrected fairly satisfactorily by development and by use of a printing paper of appropriate contrast. Over-exposed negatives of course must not be fully developed in a normal M-Q developer, as the result is a negative which lacks good gradation, and is devoid of contrast, as well as being dirty grey and taking a long time to print. If such a negative were developed short of the standard time, however, a fair result would be obtained. The negative would not possess the contrast or gradation which the connoisseur aims at, but it would print quite well on a contrast paper. Under-exposure in like circumstances is not a fatal flaw. Negatives treated in this way may be over-developed, and will eventually yield a fair print on soft or normal paper.

The Influence of Modern Trends

The difficulty in applying the matters just mentioned to practical photography lies in two modern trends—(a) the use of roll films, and (b) the miniature camera.

Dealing first with roll films, it is obvious that each negative cannot be individually treated in development. Cameras loading 36, 16 or 12 exposures on one film are common nowadays, and it is false economy to sacrifice all to one perfect negative. Thus the necessity is made apparent for a uniform exposure of all films on the roll, not necessarily "correct exposure," for I will show that the correctness or otherwise of an exposure is mainly relative, depending on other matters and, ultimately, on personal taste.

Once all negatives are uniformly exposed half the battle is over. They can then all be similarly treated, but there is hardship in obtaining the same exposure every time. The method least open to error is the use of a photo-electric meter, and, if that is not available, some other exposure meter which is more reliable than the naked eye. You may not care, in the light of the remarks I shall make later, to adhere strictly to the manufacturer's Scheiner rating, but you must use some standard and stick to it.

Fine Grain Development

Once uniform exposure is obtained the second difficulty, which arises chiefly from the use of miniature cameras, becomes manifest, and it is a bugbear of many an amateur. One word, "Grain," conjures up a host of things,

and often has the sole effect of making the amateur err on the side of under exposure and under development for fear that the negative might show grain; such results are usually disastrous and hardly printable.

The exposure latitude of films of size 2¼in. x 3¼in. and larger is great because, if reasonably uniform, the error can be corrected in development without the grain becoming apparent. With miniature negatives the latitude is smaller owing to the greater degree of enlargement required, but nevertheless it is greater than the average amateur imagines. The faster the film, the more careful should one be to work at the manufacturer's quoted speed, and the permissible variations are therefore comparatively small, but in using fine grain films like Panatomic and Isopan F it is possible to obtain remarkable results with great exposure latitude without the grain being objectionable or even evident. Personally, I prefer a slow fine grain film to a fast one (except for freak shots and night work), and by slight under-exposure and over-development I am able to obtain negatives of the contrast I desire.

Most camera users have two objections to miniature photography—one is the lack of contrast obtained in negatives and the other is the danger of grain. These matters, however real they may be to some photographers, are not inevitable, and they may be avoided by judicious exposure and co ordinated development.

Evolving a Standard

Any amateur can make an experiment to obtain a standard exposure and development factor, providing he does his own developing. The developer, of course, must be chosen first, and there are many available. One of the most used is D76, a M-Q borax developer, which is recommended for fine grain results and is good for almost any negative at all. The experiment, of course, can be equally applied to any developer.

Negatives should be exposed by the camera at three or four different stops or exposures (e.g., *f*4.5 at 1/250, 1/100, 1/50, 1/25 second, representing 24, 26, 28 and 30 degrees Scheiner on a given subject as read from the exposure meter), and developed to a normal time. The time for D76 is generally stated to be 9 12 minutes. Develop for say 10 minutes, and then cut the film longitudinally, wash one half and transfer it to the fixing bath, and continue the development of the other half for say 12 minutes. When both pieces are fixed, washed and dried, you will have examples of over-exposure, under-exposure, over-development and under-development. Compare the results one with the other, and you will find that one or two please you particularly. Next try them for grain by printing a small part of an 8 or 10 times enlargement on glossy paper. Enlargements of this size are as much as the normal person wants for practical purposes, and if the grain is not objectionable at that size, then he should be satisfied.

It may be that none of the results obtained is of the exact gradation required, but that the desideratum lies somewhere between two of them. If this is the case, a further experiment should be made with more closely spaced development times until the precise result desired is achieved. Eventually, a negative will be obtained to suit the taste and to give good enlargements, and this should be made a standard. By exposing Isopan F film at 29-30 degrees Scheiner, I find I can obtain good negatives after 10½ minutes' development at 65° Fah. (18° C.). This will not suit every taste, nor will it suit every camera, as slight differences always exist in shutters and exposure meters which may mean quite a lot in the long run.

It will be found, however, that a standard of exposure and development can be obtained which pleases the amateur, and if this is adhered to considerable difficulties are at once removed from practical photography.

RIVER CANOEING

Its Thrills and Spills

BY SHEILAGH D. PORTER
(River Canoe Club and Sydney Bush Walkers)

WELL, at long last I've been canoeing! And gone are all my romantic notions of that recreation. For years I've cherished a Hollywood-conceived picture of willows drooping to placid waters, green meadows and summer peace a well-cushioned craft propelled by a handsome male and myself reclining gracefully to complete the tableau.

But, somehow, it didn't quite cut to that pattern. True enough, there are sometimes willows and placid waters and green pastures and summer peace; but I had reckoned without the spiked casuarinas and gaunt gums and other trees which must, through my ignorance, remain nameless. My version of canoing had not included mud and steep banks, and stones and rocky gorges. Neither had I given thought to snakes and flies and mosquitoes, nor treacherous snags and rushing waters. And, although it had not been an effort to even picture myself "reclining gracefully," I would never have believed I could be screwed into an incredibly small space amidships, with "gear" fore and aft, and enjoy myself.

But, honestly, what a thrilling business it is! There's rare exhilaration in shooting the rapids when the cry is "Paddle or sink!"—and you usually accomplish both. There's an eerie stillness in the deep pools, broken only by the gentle "splash" as the paddles dip and there's excitement and fear and indescribable emotion when, without warning, the boat upturns and you're tumbled inelegantly into the swift-running current. You're dragged, gasping, to the safety of the bank, or, to be more truthful you generally rescue yourself, since the skipper's first concern must always be for his ship; and there you shiver and talk loudly and pretend not to hear the small voice of reactionary fear which temporarily grips you. There are times, too, when the skies are clear and the canoe glides gaily along. Then you almost burst with exaltation and want to shout aloud: "God's in His Heaven; all's right with the world."

The First Trip

My first canoeing excursion was made in October of last year, when the River Canoe Club held an outing down the Warragamba during the holiday Eight-Hour-Day week-end. The skipper who invited me on that memorable cruise is an old hand at the game, but the third member of our crew was a land-lubber like myself. I accepted that invitation with much trepidation and spent a few sleepless nights in fearful anticipation.

During those three memorable days my canoeing education began. I was taught to hop in and out quickly without capsizing the boat, and learned to sit still and do as I was bid without comment—this was difficult! I learned to bale out nineteen-to-the-dozen when we beached, and to regard with comparative equanimity the oft-repeated process of "drying-out." I learned the difference between bulkhead and bilge, and the necessity for quick thinking and quicker action. "Gunwhale itch" was soon more than a name to me, so that sometimes it was a relief to portage the gear. I saw kindness and fun and good-fellowship, and gaped in wonder as I watched the canoes being expertly "roped through." Every time a boat upturned I froze with terror.

Since then I've done two other trips, and each makes me anxious for more. To those who believe that variety is the spice of life, canoeing can be recommended. In the rain it is most uncomfortable, and the sun can be blisteringly hot. A head wind almost breaks your heart, and portages are usually an unmitigated curse. But canoeing is a great game and a recreation quite apart. It calls for skill and strength and courage, and when you haven't these you make the best of what you have. There's excitement and contentment on a river—there's malediction and benediction in its Voice.

An Appreciation

At the Annual Meeting of the Federation held in July last, Mr. T. A. Herbert, who has been President of the Federation for two years, did not stand for re-election to that position.

Mr. Herbert's term of office has been one of faithful and diligent service to the Federation and its ideals, and it has been marked by an energy and acuteness of mind rivalled by few other members in the bush walking movement. An excellent chairman, quick on the uptake, and well able to keep order in any meeting, Mr. Herbert has been a model of impartiality and has never failed to impress all who have come in contact with him, nor to earn the admiration of the many delegates to the Federation's monthly meetings.

Though he will not in the immediate future occupy the presidential chair, Mr. Herbert does not intend to forsake his Federation interests. He will continue to act as a delegate from the Sydney Bush Walkers and will devote his activities to his position on the Board of the Garawarra Park Trust, as Secretary of which he has performed sterling service for some time past.

Mr. W. A. Holesgrove, the former Vice-President, has succeeded to the office vacated by Mr. Herbert, and though a high standard has been set for him to maintain, we know that he will carry out the duties incident to that position with his accustomed ability.

WANDERING THROUGH ARALUEN VALLEY

BY YVONNE DOUGLAS and CHAS. ROLFE
(Sydney Bush Walkers)

BUSH WALKERS seeking an ideal Summer walk should visit the Araluen and Deua River Valleys. Here rural beauty and rugged grandeur go hand in hand. Crystal clear streams flow through ideal grazing lands and fat cattle lie contentedly in the shade of casuarinas. In the distance blue peaks beckon to the more adventurous.

Last November saw us aboard the train en route for the "Dewy." Our starting place was Tarago, from where we travelled to Braidwood by service car. We found Braidwood a picturesque old town, rich in historical interest, for years ago it was a thriving mining centre. Now it has settled down to the less exciting occupation of farming. We were told by a resident that one of the churches was literally built with gold nuggets which the miners used to put on the plates on Sundays. Next day we stocked up with fresh bread and a few vegetables and set off for Bell's Creek. Our way led us through undulating pastoral lands dotted here and there with farm houses, and watered by swampy creeks. Bell's Creek was once a rich alluvial gold diggings, but now consists of a Post Office farm house.

Here the road left the pastoral lands and passed through typical mountain growth, and being fairly high up, we were able to catch glimpses of the surrounding mountains. We had noticed the heavy mist clinging to the hill tops and asked the lady at the post office if it was a sign of rain. "Oh no," she said, "that's just a sea breeze from the coast" (approximately 50 miles away). It was the first sea breeze that we have ever been able to see. The ruins of many gold races were along the creeks, and deserted huts bore silent witness of the "roaring days."

From the lookout above the Valley we were entranced by the magnificent view before us. The Araluen Creek meandered along through green paddocks, its banks lined with graceful willows and casuarinas. The summer sun simmered down and everything looked drowsy and still. Wending our way down the pass, we soon arrived in Araluen township, and while we replenished our supplies we learned that the population was once around the 50,000 mark and that some 100 odd hotels had flourished throughout the Valley.

Interesting Personalities

We found a pretty place to camp just outside the township, and while we were waiting for the butcher to corn us a piece of beef we wandered about and made the acquaintance of one of the locals. He became very interested in our trip and warned us of snakes on the Deua River. "They stand up on their hind legs and bark," said he. Incidentally, we didn't see a snake on the whole trip. Whilst talking to us, he put his hand into his vest pocket and produced two eggs which, he informed us, were hard boiled and for his tea. He then proceeded to peel them, still keeping up a conversation. In the meantime the door opened and we were able to see signs of recent ablutions, for in the centre of the room was a large bathtub, while water and clothes were scattered around the room. From out of this chaos stepped a most immaculate vision dressed in a well pressed brown suit, complete with vest and bowler hat and shoes all polished. But, to our amazement, when he approached us we noticed

he was sans shirt, singlet, collar and tie. After bidding us good evening, he strolled off with more swagger than a Duke of the Realm.

Nor was this the end of our adventures, for that same evening, as we were about to retire, we were disturbed by loud voices and flaring lights in the distance. We decided to investigate, and, armed with large sticks and a tomahawk, crept cautiously down to the river and awaited the menace. As it advanced down the river towards us we were able to distinguish the forms of men carrying kerosene flares and long wooden spears. They were wading knee deep in the stream, and cussing and swearing like a cartload of bullockies. Every few minutes one of them would shout out, make a sndden dive with his spear, and thrust a writhing body into the chaff bag on his back—yes, they were only enjoying Araluen Valley's Saturday evening pastime—eeling.

A Hot Run

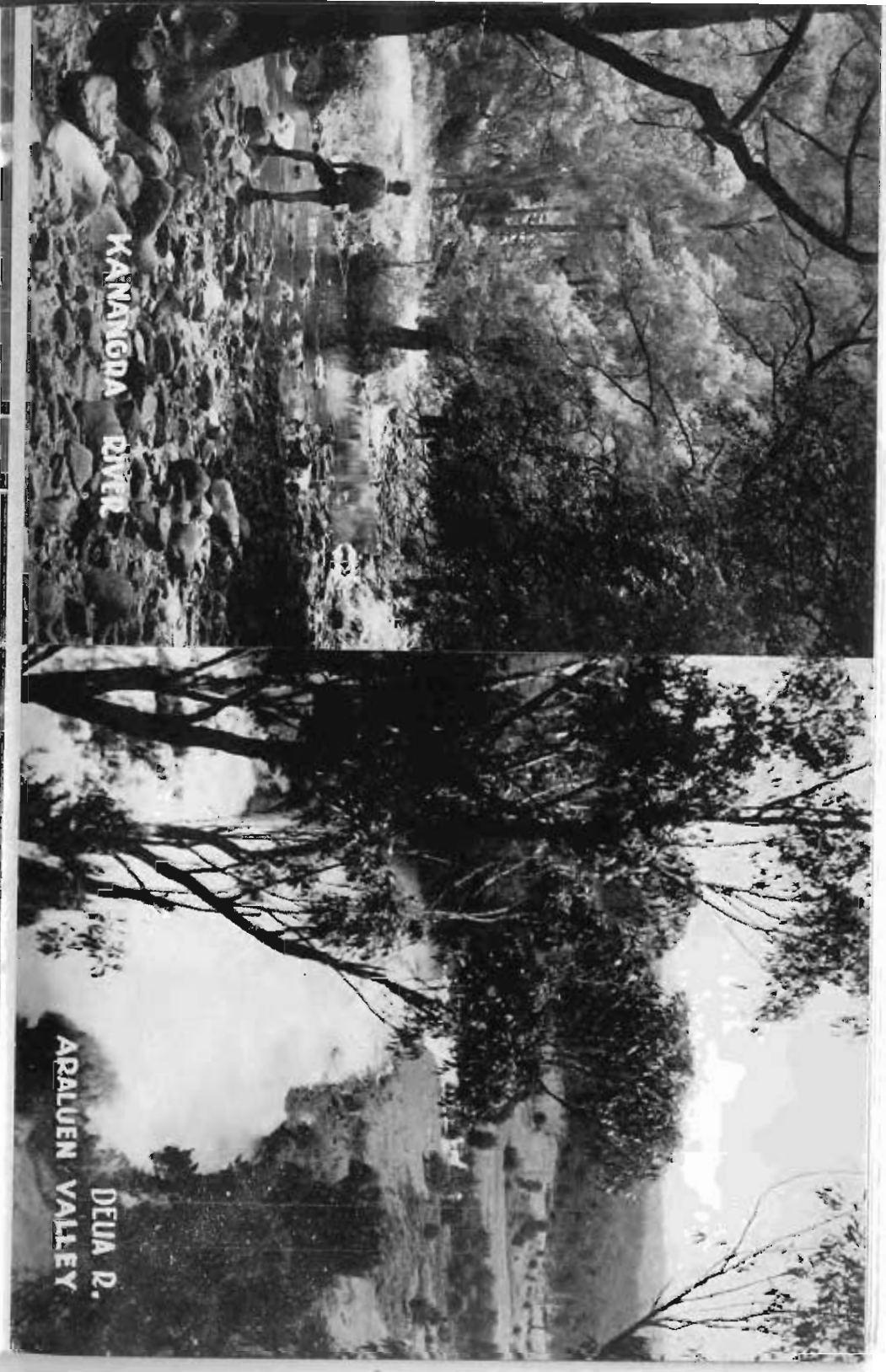
Next day we left the Valley and, after a very hot morning's walk, met still more adventure in the shape of a BULL. We had asked permission to cross a paddock to avoid, as we thought, a hot walk, and so get to the Deua more quickly. The farmer warned us of young steers in the paddock, some being a bit on the wild side. Soon we came to a nice cool pool and decided to have a dip before lunch, but, not liking the look of a young bull who was eyeing us, we left our things near a fence—in case of an accident. Just as we were finishing our meal, Yvonne looked up, muttered something, and made a wild dive through the fence. We soon found out the cause of this burst of energy, for, glancing up, we beheld the bull, charging full speed ahead across the paddock, and it was only a matter of seconds before we too were scrambling after her. About fifty yards away from us our young friend pulled up and stood looking at us with such a bad glint in his eye that we thought it was time to move. So with sticks we hauled our packs through the fence and threw things into them as fast as we could. It was only a short while before we were moving off again. Our way now passed a large herd of cattle that were peacefully browsing in the shade of trees. When we were nearly abreast of them, the bull started to bellow, and very soon the peaceful cattle were peaceful no longer, but were moving towards us in a solid mass. We didn't wait to meet them, but turned and tore up a hot, treeless hill as fast as our legs could carry us, nor did we stop till we had reached the road. Later on in the day we found that the temperature at that time was around about 106°. Were we hot!

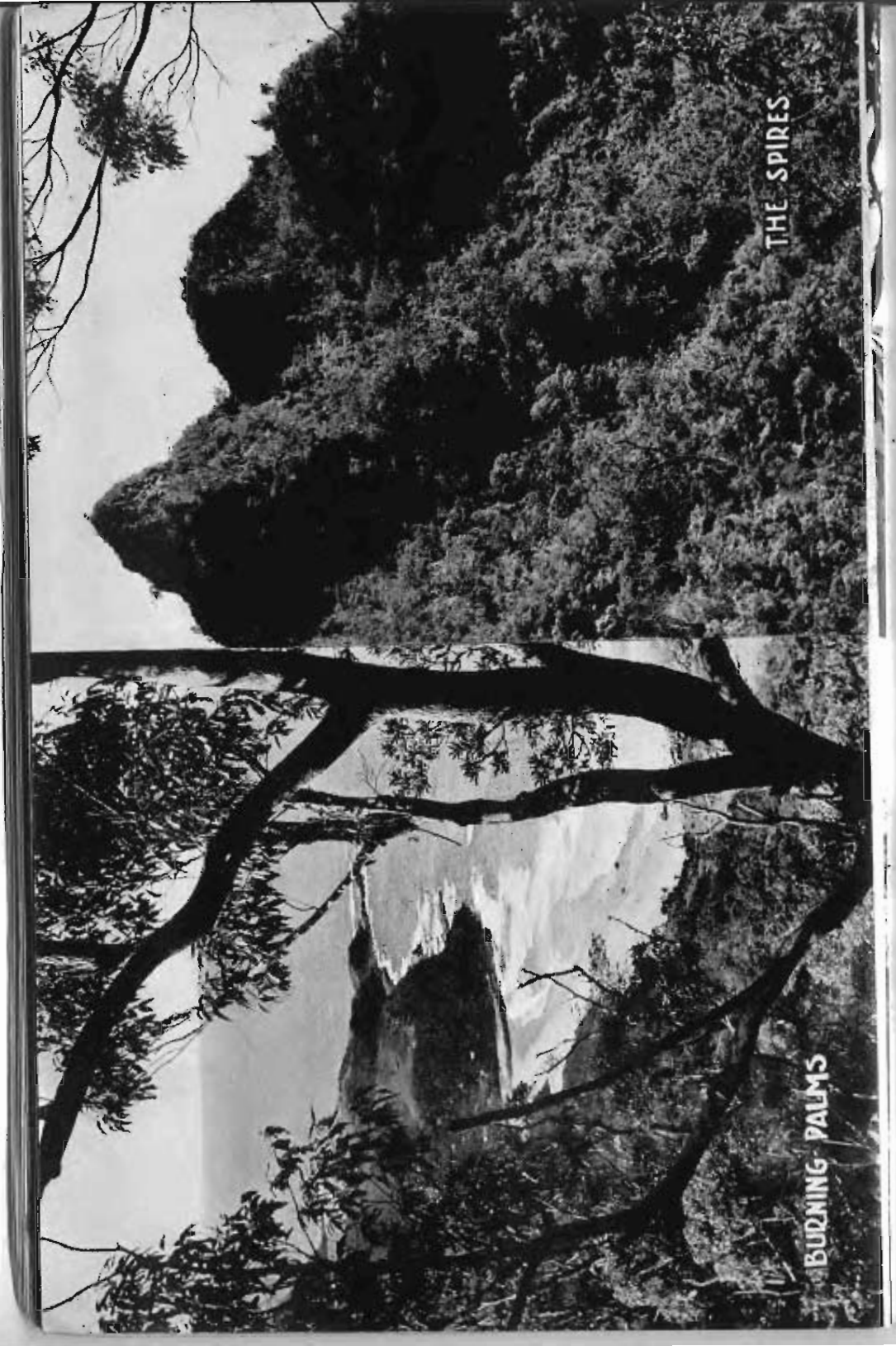
We reached the Deua, however, without further mishap, and spent a whole day recovering. From here on to Moruya we passed through some of the most beautiful walking country one could wish for. Crystal water to swim in and cool, green, tree-lined banks along which to stroll—what more could any walker ask? We were able to buy fresh eggs and milk all along the way, and so lessened our burdens.

The week passed all too quickly, and soon we found ourselves back in Sydney with dozens of photographs and memories of one of the best holidays we have ever had.

The work of the Federation is increasing by leaps and bounds in all spheres, and in particular it is pleasing to note that its prestige and public force show a vast improvement on previous years. This is due largely to the greater number of enthusiasts in the movement and to the untiring and ceaseless efforts of the Hon. Secretary, Mr. C. D'A. Roberts, and those who act as his assistants in carrying on the administrative work of the Federation.

For the first time, the Federation this year has printed an Annual Report of its work during the year 1938-1939, and a perusal of this document, totalling ten pages, will indicate how extensive are the ramifications of the Federation and what its administration entails. Many copies of this are still available and will be furnished on application to the Hon. Secretary.





SPIRE CLIMBING

BY J. C. BARNARD
(The Bushlanders' Club of N.S.W. and The Warrigal Club of N.S.W.)

IT all happened because of Mitchell, who has a true Warrigal's dislike to humping three weeks' supply of food at a time, and who gets over the difficulty by leaving caches of food at one or two strategic places in his itinerary. He was due to lay down two such food depots in the vicinity of Kanangra one week-end early in the year. I was in Lithgow at the time, and with Frank Craft, who resides there, perforce, agreed to be an advance guard for Rae's party. We reached the rendezvous at Boyd Creek early, but midnight passed with the balance of the party still missing. We slumbered.

The following day we waited as long as possible for the other three —Mitchell, Cohen and Scott. They arrived a little later, but just too late, unfortunately, to participate in the expedition to the Spires.

We ambled gently over Kanangra Tops and paused to debate the probable discovery of Smith's Pass, which was known, at any rate, in 1889, when Surveyor Leigh reported on the district. Thence along Kilpatrick's Causeway for a short distance and down a spur to Kanangra Creek, sweetly murmuring in the gorge. We left it with regrets and commenced the ascent at 11.20 a.m.

The Climb Begins

The point chosen to leave the creek, which is 1,375 feet above sea-level, is a few hundred yards above the junction with Danae Brook, and is identifiable from the top of the "Walls" by a triangle of dense green vegetation without any visible cliffs. It proved to be steep, but negotiable. The first few hundred feet were open with a north coast effect of trees and vines overhead, and clear ground for climbing. This soon changed to dense scrub tangled with ground vines and a few cliffs to give variety. The going was terrific, it being necessary to use both hands and knees in climbing and to smash a way through the growth. Each took his own track, partly to avoid delay and partly for fear of dislodging rocks on the trailing climber. Six hundred feet above the creek the vines ended suddenly, and we passed on to the sharp ridge overlooking Danae Brook. Here the steep earth slope was replaced by large rocks and an equally steep knife edge covered with criss-crossed eucalypt scrub. This continued to the first shoulder (2,300 feet), which compensated for gentler slopes by more rocks and a small col choked with undergrowth.

This was the end of the first stage, and the second began a series of quartzite bars which continued right up to the summit. This involved zig-zag climbing to negotiate the sharp ends, and a particularly nasty piece emerging on to the second shoulder, whence a fine view of the great cliff on the northern face of the Spires was obtained. Having got this far we were "all-in." The day had become very hot and there was little shelter from the sun in the straggly vegetation of the ridge. The actual knife edge was impassable, as it had many bare rock faces and a sheer wall on the right. There remained only a broken, rocky cliff face on the right, rather akin to the steepest portion of the western ridge of Mt. Solitary, but a good deal more complex. We recruited on the shady side of a big rock and discussed prospects. Lunch seemed the best thing, but as a trace of energy returned, we cast glances at the top of the eastern spire, which now seemed directly overhead and only a couple of hundred feet away. Eventually we decided to tackle it before lunching—not with any

enthusiasm, but with the feeling well-known to all walkers: "We're getting this in the neck sooner or later, and we might as well get it now." You will guess we felt no fresher when we stepped on to the top together, after adding four hundred feet to the score. This was at 1.55 p.m.

The Eastern Spire

Once on the top, at a height of 3,150 feet, we were revived by an exhilarating view, as well as some lunch and an inadequate mug of tea. As we munched our scanty fare, a broadside of artillery seemed to go off near the Falls. It rumbled around the gorge, and clouds of dust arose. Faint shouts and cheers were audible; we coo-eed and were answered by yells from Mitchell and his friends, who had taken to rock rolling to pass the time of day. The eastern spire proved to be a narrow ridge with a capping of purple shale carrying a few mountain oaks (casuarina nana): the ridge leading to the western spire is a jagged knife edge which made us shudder before lunch, and did not inspire friendly thoughts later. The worst and lowest part is a quartzite causeway, eighteen inches to three feet wide, with sheer bare slopes on either side to Kanangra Creek and Danae Brook. Here I left Craft the honour of crossing alone, and he did the first part on all fours like a caterpillar. The climb to the top of the western spire was the brightest episode of the day to watch, being steep and treacherous, with big pieces of quartzite breaking away and tumbling away to the abysmal depths below. The top, which is 3,200 feet, be reported as small, covered with broken rock, and the pinnacle impression gained from the "walls" is confirmed when one stands on the crest.

Back came this Spartan across the causeway, and together we left the eastern spire and went down the reverse slope to our jumping-off place on Kanangra Creek. Here we revived ourselves for the climb out, and made Smith's Pass just as dusk was falling. It was dark by the time we arrived at the cave, to find the other three wondering whether they could perjure themselves to say something complimentary about us. The day ended with a night ride in "Fanny" (Morris Oxford) and "Juggernaut Joe" (Pontiac) back to Boyd Camp, and a big feast in which all long-distance eating championship records were broken.

The scenery from the spires defies description, but may I say at least that the views of Danae are absolutely grand, and the walker gets a real thrill standing on these heights, with the profound depths of Kanangra on one side and Danae on the other, both of which may be seen without moving the head. This is Kanangra at its best.

Many interesting contributions and comments on the subject of conservation are contained in the Report of the Royal Commission appointed by the Victorian Government to enquire into the widespread bush fires which raged in the early months of this year. Foremost amongst these is the recommendation of a land utilisation control board and, in effect, a land utilisation survey of the country in which fires are prevalent or likely to occur. Such a survey has been urged by conservationists for some time, and, coming from a Royal Commission, it is hoped that the Government of Victoria at least will put the proposal into execution.

Another important suggestion made by the Report was the adoption of a type of conscription to fight fires by compelling all able-bodied men in the district to assist in the suppression of fires under sanction of fine or imprisonment for refusal. Though this will be deprecated by many as a severe infringement on private rights of liberty and freedom of action, it must be realised that drastic measures are necessary to combat as serious and violent a scourge as the fire menace.

CONSERVATION and the WALKER

BY FRANK A. CRAFT
(The Warrigal Club of N.S.W.)

IN bushland conservation, the walker is primarily concerned with the protection of his own interests. He realises that he is not entitled to speak for the community at large, but he wants to have special areas preserved in something like their natural condition for the use of walkers, walking campers, and other pedestrian nature lovers. The conservation of natural resources for economic use lies outside his province; such matters as water supply, soil, timber, minerals, can only be dealt with by properly qualified men with long field experience to guide them. When the walker touches on such matters during his own efforts he does so with great trepidation: if he is wise, he applies Thackeray's advice—"to take the calculations at second-hand, as you do logarithms, for to work them yourself, depend upon it, will cost you something considerable."

It may be stated as an axiom that there can be no valid objection to the proper use of any large natural resource. Waste and wanton destruction should be guarded against by everyone, and there is no argument against the preservation of tracts of country in their natural condition, with the accompanying letting alone of their slender resources.

Wanted—Tolerance!

We hasten to deprecate any suggestion that the interests of walkers clash with those of any other large section of the community. We realise that primary producing interests, including some of the most notable graziers, have been in the van of the fight against soil erosion, and that the only land likely to be in dispute is in the roughest highlands. From the viewpoint of recreation, all thoughtful people, whether recreational walkers or not, are dismayed by the spreading tentacles of modern cities. More than a third of a million motor vehicles are available in this State for touring, and a great proportion is so used. One does not have to be a motorist for long to realise that the car owner and his passengers are tied down to roads fenced off with barbed wire and "trespassers will be prosecuted" notices, which keep him out of the bush and the hills.

In this respect the walker is better off than the more numerous motorist. At least he can break through the zone of settlement into the promised land of gullies, creeks and cliffs beyond. Nevertheless, he has to consider the question of time, which is usually limited to a day or so, and he regrets the steady disappearance of bushland haunts within easy distance of the cities. He asks that the least useful of these from an economic viewpoint be preserved; some, at least, should be roadless.

Every advocate of bushland preservation must approach the problem with tolerance. The motoring army has claims to new scenery, unspoiled countryside, and good camping places: the growing force of walkers, representing one of the most active and vital sections of the youth of the nation, has its own need of space for adventure and recreation. There is no question of basic disagreement here, as is demonstrated by the use of the Kanangra road for the transport of walkers and their loads.

Bush Walking Lands

The case for reservations of Crown Lands in the particular interests of walkers hinges on lands being available which are best used for walking, and for which an actual demand exists. The Erskine Creek area and much of the Grose highlands are cases in point. Their economic usefulness is almost nil; their coal will be worked from a few points near their edges, and roadwork is almost impossible over their greater parts. The glens and

uplands of these districts, inaccessible to any except the pedestrian, must become the national parks of the near future to serve Sydney bush-lovers. The slopes and depths of the great fauna and flora reserve about the Kowmung and the middle Cox might also be best administered as a national park. Like the others, its territories are greatly used by the ubiquitous pack carrier.

Up to this point the claims of the walker are very strong. It would be sheer presumption, however, for him to venture to claim the reservation of all Crown lands with the object of keeping them for the benefit of walkers only. Specific reservation only becomes necessary when a measure of control is needed; this can hardly be applied to absolute wilderness far removed from any means of communication, and with no use for settlement or recreation. The Colo gorges provide an ideal case. Such areas may be sufficiently protected by the enforcement of bushfire laws, and by the extension of Government protection to all catchments liable to serious erosion.

Another matter which arises is this: many of the places beloved by the pioneers whom we call the walking fraternity have to be abandoned to general tourism. Burragorang Valley and its environs form a case in point, and there are many similar areas which are needed to give the city motorist or tourist the bushland freedom which he desires. Walkers have to beware of mistaking "conservation" for "exclusionism," and wasting their energy in trying to exclude roads and motorists from places well adapted to them.

A Natural Balance Appears

If fires can be eliminated (they can be!) and a proper system of catchment management instituted for all the highlands, neither walkers nor others need worry very much about the protection of waste lands which have no organised tourist or recreational appeal. The boundaries of settlement in the highlands are pretty well stabilised as a result of a century's experience, and in many places the tendency is for the bush to advance over land previously cleared.

We must also notice the general tendency towards re-concentration of populations. In Britain, for example, the depopulation of the highlands continues; this movement is a general feature of modern civilisation. In our own country we notice the increasing emphasis on the intensive development of the best areas, with neglect of the most difficult as a corollary. This is, perhaps, the most important single factor making for the preservation of the wilderness.

So far as roads are concerned, it must not be thought that they can be multiplied indefinitely. With the improvement of main roads, the motorist becomes increasingly reluctant to use rough tracks. New roads must either be maintained at a high standard, or they will join the great mileage which has gone into oblivion. As the expense of maintenance advances, the amount of new construction must decline; this gives an automatic restriction upon the invasion of bushlands by roads, and makes it selective. The general menace of roads to natural values has been greatly exaggerated, and the readiness of the Government to grant reservations along much of the new Kanangra road shows the growing idea of a tourist road as one passing through natural scenery, not just another fenced lane through bare paddocks.

In Conclusion

The walking movement has a definite sphere of usefulness in the conservation field. It has to act to preserve the recreation spaces used by its members, particularly near the city. Its influence might well be exercised towards the creation of a Government bureau for national conservation, which would establish a much needed land utilisation survey, and place land use and reservations upon a more objective basis. In the absence of such a survey, intelligent planning is impossible.

CONTRAST

BY H. A. SALMON
(The Trampers' Club of N.S.W.)

THE place was The Boyd Plateau and Kanangra Tops; the month was January, and the year 1939. To the eyes of the bush lover one of nature's tragedies had been enacted. The Fire Demon had departed, leaving a blackened and charred landscape. From Sally Camp to the Kowmung, from Thurat to Morong Deep, a green scrub was a microscopic oasis in a never-ending desert.

With the mercury jumping over the century mark, words are needless to convey the depressed feelings of out party. The view from Kanangra was blanketed by smoke and heat haze. Along Gingra and down Root's Route we pushed through burnt scrub, birds and animals being conspicuous by their absence. The Kowmung banks were free of nettles and milk weed —all had been eaten by starving cattle. In the deep gullies off Gingra, wongas, gang-gangs, and dozens of other birds were so terrified by the fires that they were unafraid of the "monster-man". Driven from the hills by fires, mobs of 'roos and wallabies fed on the sparse scorched herbage of the river banks, while the river water was luke-warm.

. . .

The month has changed—it is July.

Mother Nature, with feminine fickleness, had decided that she was tired of black and was clothing herself in green—green of every shade and hue. In the open forest grass sprouted; along Pfeffer's Trail eucalypts pushed out shoots of olive green, and on Kanangra Tops the banksias were covered in new foliage; while around the feet of the blackened spears of "Sally" a mat of bright green shoots gave promise of a solid Sally Scrub to impede walkers next spring.

From Rocky Top to Kanangra the view was crystal clear—the scarps of the Blue Mountains stood out clothed in glorious pastel tints of every conceivable shade, and, like a diamond tiara on a golden head, the Hydro glistened dazzlingly in the light of the afternoon sun.

This time our track took us into Kanangra Creek, in which, at the turn of the year, swarms of grasshoppers had been seen. Now, only seven months later, the alluvial benches were covered with nettles and fishbone fern; so thick were they that it was difficult to find a clear space for the tent.

Although the thermometer varied between 20° and 32° from sunset to sunrise, during the day 60° and 70° were common, and one wondered if spring had "crashed the gate." In spite of the season, many species of birds were observed—a wombat drowsed lazily in the morning sun near Roly Whalan's selection. On the rivers, wallaroos and wallabies were shy and scarce, having retired to fastnesses of the ranges, which now offered food and water.

Though it shows little signs of industrial activity apart from a few coal lorries, Burragorang Valley is a source of great mineral wealth. Apart from the coal, and the silver-lead ore, the valley contains immense deposits of kerosene shale, which, however, have never been worked. The shale was first discovered by that picturesque old soul, Henry Chiddy, when ploughing his land near Tonalli Peak in 1862. It appears that the plough turned up a lump of rock which he subsequently used to prop up a burning log and its inflammable nature was observed. Some 25 years later another discovery of shale was made in the valley of the Kowmung near Boyd Creek.

FOOTPATHS

BY "PRO BONO PUBLICO"

FROM time to time we read accounts of footpath-making by the walkers themselves in other lands. The most spectacular is the five-thousand-mile trail from Mexico towards the Canadian border, but New Zealand runs a good second in the matter of trail-making. In New South Wales we are fortunate because the bush, being open and largely free of undergrowth, it is possible to go through most of it fairly easily without any trail, so that the need for footpaths is not as pressing.

At the same time, the job of the experienced bnsh walker is not to cater merely for himself: he must think about his less experienced brother and sister, the beginners who belong to no club and who are likely to get lost without tracks. One of our newspapers estimated that about 10,000 of Sydney's popnlation would spend a recent holiday week-end with packs on their backs out in the bush, and this is probably an under estimate. Hiking and bush walking are generally acknowledged to be the healthiest of pastimes, but Sydney's bnshlands possess probably fewer tracks than any other land where hiking and bush walking are so popular.

Even for the experienced bush walker a footpath is a godsend when a road is the only alternative, or when pressed for time and a quick get back to the station route is wanted.

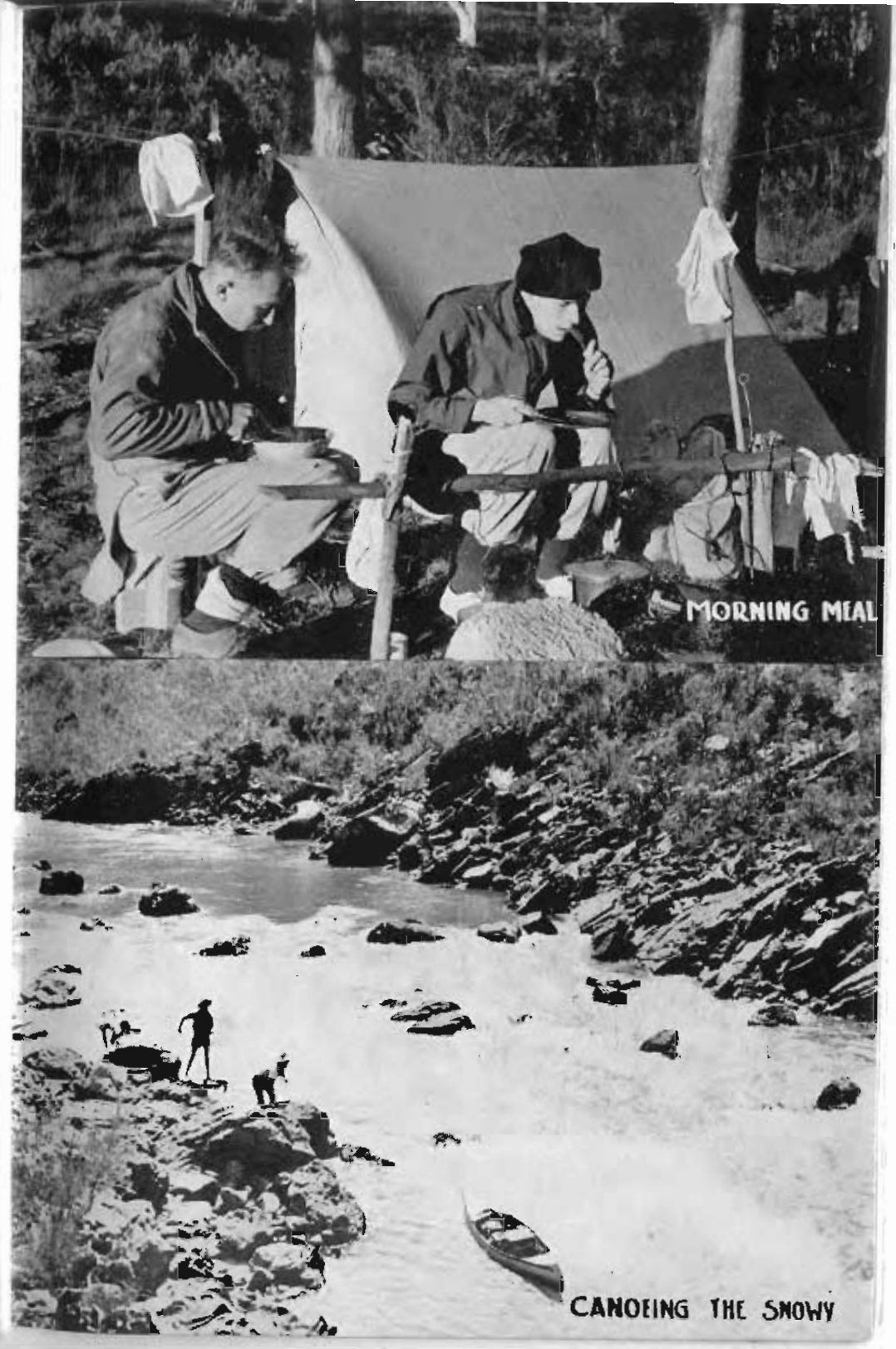
Preservation of Plant Life

There is a last and still mort important reason for making footpaths, and that is the preservation of the bush by keeping walkers on one track and discouraging them from wandering here, there and everywbere and trampling down the wild plants. This does not apply in the distant country, but it applies very mnch indeed to the accessible bushlands aronnd Sydney which are disappearing so rapidly.

We cry out indignantly and rightly when local councils, National Park Trusts, and other authorities take away our long-used tracks and turn them into hard motor-roads. No path should be stolen from us unless another as good is provided in its place. But the authorities are not the only ones at fault. What have WE done to make the tracks we so badly need? In other lands they do not cry out for a beneficent government to do the work. They do it themselves. That is the spirit we want in New South Wales. It is here: it needs only the necessary organising to bring it into play. The bush walking representatives on the trust of the Bouddi Natural Park have set the ball rolling by arranging for a working bee on the second week-end in May, 1940, to make footpaths and do other work. That is the beginning. Let 1940 see a net-work of paths in the bush around Sydney.

One of the State's most enthusiastic conservationists has a scheme on foot for the establishment of a natural park area in the Patonga district to be patrolled by a ranger resident nearby. Amongst the ambitions of this ardent conservationist is the setting up of a library on Australiana and the carrying out of reafforestation work in the reserve. The park in question contains about 4,000 acres, and by resisting the depredations of flower gatherers and the menace of the bush fire, as well as by re-planting, much good will be done to this very fine district, which incidentally embraces some of the finest coastal scenery in the State.

Mr. John D. Tipper has also done some fine work for conservation in his Natural Sanctuary "Muogamarra" near Cowan. This is perhaps the finest promontory on the Hawkesbury, and its administration is a tribute to the patience and energy of its curator. A visit to the sanctuary will repay you.



GUARDING MT. SANSATO

DAVIES' CANYON

DAVIES' CANYON

BY R. ELSE MITCHELL
(The Warrigal Club of N.S.W.)

IN the most rugged part of the mountains between the gigantic heights of Guouogong and Paralyser the Kanangra River takes its course sheltered in a gorge close on 3,000 feet in depth. This stream, according to the map, is the true Kanangra River, and though compared with its tributary, Kanangra Creek, it has a short course, it is nevertheless a merry one.

The river rises by the granite tops of Krunglebungle, and, before reaching major proportions, cascades over faces of rock till it reaches the quartzite beds, when it descends rapidly over a series of falls to meet a sister stream emerging from the shady depths of Davies' Canyon. Together these streams form the Kanangra River as we know it, and as it happily pursues its boisterous path to join Kanangra Creek and the Cox's River.

The Canyon Source

But most attractive of all is Davies' Canyon, which supplies the greater part of the water in the river. Its waterway does not possess an official name, but its main source is Sally Camp Creek, which rises near Cunynghame's on the Kanangra Road, and, in company with one or two other creeks, cuts a northerly course across the Thurat Tops. Its career is short, but chequered: from a height of 3,500 feet it drops in four miles to 1,200 feet, where it meets Kanangra River, and throughout it presents an endless variety of delightful and exciting aspects.

Altogether the creek has some ten or twelve falls, ranging from 30 feet to 150 or 200 feet in height, which have been formed by erosion of surface rock laying bare the tilted quartzite which forms bars across the creek bed. Tumbling down long series of cascades, the creek swirls into mirrored pools graced by cedars, kurrajongs and tangled vines, its impetuous course temporarily interrupted till it leaves the lower end by a narrow torrent, which gaily bounds amongst the boulders scattered in the rocky creek bed. In places it wells up like water in a sand hole and, overflowing the rocky barrier which nature has provided, it falls helplessly to deep pools below. The water here, icy even in the summer, is uninviting; its grey-black depths do not attract, but rather are ominous and repel the walker who fain would take a plunge to cool his heated body.

Waterfalls Galore

Yet around the next bend the stream develops another mood. It comes to falls of beauty, delicate as the tracery of fine lace or Madeira work, the water spreading like a film over the glossy wet surface of the rocks down which it slides to peaceful reaches of the creek. The spirit of the creek here seems to reflect the soft gaiety of the vegetation and the colour of the bird life which abounds so plentifully; its beauty and charm are irresistible.

Above the creek the eastern side is crowned with the rocky ramparts of the ridge out to Paralyser, crumbling here and there to long avalanche slides, while the western side slopes up towards the heights of Krunglebungle. Rain forest, brush, cedars and monkey ropes adorn the banks and the mountain sides till the rocky slopes above deprive them of a hold for their tenuous roots.

This is a paradise in summer, where the sun makes a short visit each day during the midday hours and where nature can be seen in her every mood—fierce, beautiful, and calm. Here can be enjoyed in summer those delights of the bush which we seek without the oppressive heat of January days and nights. Though it is one of the less known parts of our mountains, the Canyon is well worth a visit, and to those of a pioneering or hardy spirit it will prove an adventure in itself.

THE BLACK DRAGON AND THE WHITE

A Mountaineering Expedition to Western China

BY MARIE B. BYLES

(The Sydney Bush Walkers, The H.H. Club, The Rucksack Club (Sydney) N.S.W.)

MOUNT SANSATO, a "fan"—for two years it was a dot on the map near the great S-shaped bend in the Yangtze River. The map marked the mountain as 20,000 feet high, and the river, which cut through the mountain massif, as 6,000 feet, and the mind conjured up visions of the stupendous gorges through which it must pass.

For about six weeks we made our way across the mountains of Burma and the rivers of Yunnan to the foot of the mountain. We travelled mainly on foot, covering anything between 15 and 30 miles a day, and the mountaineering equipment travelled with us on the backs of mules. It was the rainy season, and, wearing shorts and carrying umbrellas, we were objects of intense interest to the inhabitants of the villages through which we passed.

When at last we approached the foot of the mountain, it was swathed in the mists and rains with which the Black Dragon (the rain god) shrouds it during the summer months, and we could guess its whereabouts only by the compass.

The White Dragon Appears

After many weary weeks in a rainy camp at its foot, the Black Dragon at length departed from the heavens and Mt. Sansato stood forth, a great White Dragon piercing the blue, as awe-inspiring and formidable as any dragon of the Celestial Empire. We saw her in all her entirety, and woe betide the human being who sees the whole of a dragon's body!

Two little lonely tents amid aching fields of snowy white, the tooth-like ridge of the great White Dragon towering four thousand feet above, the fierce, bitter winds of winter swirling round—what hope had mortal beings against this queen of dragons? We approached her from the east, and later from the north; but always she rose sheer and adamantine, a long, shining ridge of white guarded by lesser ridges, sharp and phantasmal, like the mountains of fairyland.

During the warm months of the year the Black Dragon veils in mists and rain the rocks and ice of his great white sister. Then winter sets in, and the winds and blizzards howl around her until April and May, when the spring suns melt the snows and hurl tremendous avalanches from the frozen heights to the abyss beneath. In June, the Black Dragon once again mounts the heavens and the White Dragon is hidden.

Some day Sansato will be climbed, for no mountain is impossible. Probably the climbers will be ardent, young, enthusiastic amateurs content to wait weeks, maybe, at her foot for one little break in the monsoon rains, waiting with the rain and sleet drenching their tent and the snows around them; and probably, too, they will be those abnormal beings who strike an exceptionally good season. We, alas! were perfectly normal people, in that we struck an exceptionally bad one.

The last of Ancient China

Between the six persons in our party we "bagged" about seven little peaks between 14,000 and 18,000 feet. That may sound high to climbers in New Zealand, but it is not high in a place where base camp was made at 11,000 feet. Then we turned to come back through Kunming, which had recently been bombed by the Japanese. And those seven little peaks were all we got for two years of patient writing, research, reading and planning. But perhaps it was not so little really, for we were privileged to see the last of ancient China, because, if Japanese bombs do not destroy it, we and our westernism will.

It is a sad but inevitable end: sad because China is the most interesting of all the countries on earth. To visit it is like stepping on to another planet or back into an ancient civilisation come to life. Bush walking is not one of the recreations of that civilisation; nor is mountaineering. Confucius, who is to the Chinese what Christ is to Christendom, said that no filial son travels afar or climbs in high places; so the would-be Chinese bush walker starts off with an initial handicap, more especially as people in China seem to take a lot of notice of what Confucius said. However, Confucius also taught people to be tolerant, and that is why, however mad or foolish, or even wrong, our chosen recreation seemed, we were nevertheless treated kindly, and it was not the fault of the Chinese that we were defeated by the Black Dragon and the White.

SANDSTONE CAVES

BY FRANK A. CRAFT
(The Warrigal Club of N.S.W.)

GREAT is the number of sandstone caves; great also is their variety in shape and form. There are the mere crevices, ports in a storm to a distressed bush walker, into which the anatomy has to be fitted slowly and painfully. As a contrast, there are the mansion-like caves, with water falling over a nearby cliff or running in a creek just below, wood in plenty, and warm camping from every storm that blows.

I must admit to a great partiality for caves. One doesn't have to carry them about; and this is a great thing to the lazy person to whom even Paddy's ten-ounce special seems to weigh a ton at the end of a day's walking. Then they are ideal bases. The preliminary trek at night is enjoyable in the face of mist or rain if a dry cave is waiting at the end of the trail. In wet weather the cave camper has a clear view of the tendrils of mist or the graceful tracery of wet foliage outside, whilst the anguished, mutual exhortations not to touch the tent are forgotten, to the great saving of bad language and worse temper.

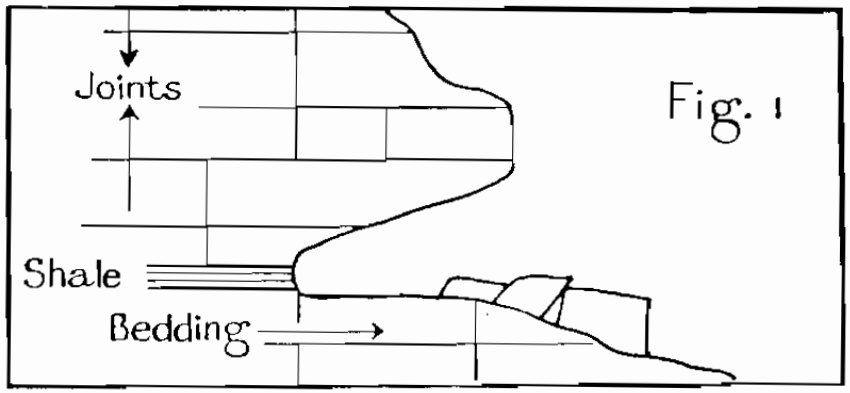


Fig. 1

In the sketches a number of typical cave sections are shown, and I will try to explain their principal features, with the definite understanding that the complicated parts of the subject are left out. Figure 1 shows the ordinary rock shelter, found on coast and highland alike, particularly in the deeper gullies or the lower parts of coastal cliffs. The shale band is weathered and then fretted out, causing sections of the overlying sandstone to break away, until a massive bed forms a permanent roof.

Horizontal bedding planes and vertical joints are responsible for the rectangular form of blocks which break away and for the general profile of the caves themselves. It will be realised that a wide spacing of the vertical joints is essential for the development of caves of any useful size, and also that joints must be close to the vertical, because an inward or outward inclination of cliff surfaces makes for mere high overhangs in the first place and smooth, caveless surfaces in the second. In this respect it is useful to note that there are two joint series, forming cliffs almost at right angles to one another. One runs almost north and south, the other east and west; if one series gives unfavourable cliffs for caves when a camp is desired, the other should be promptly explored. It is poor country that does not have one accessible camping cave within a mile of travel.

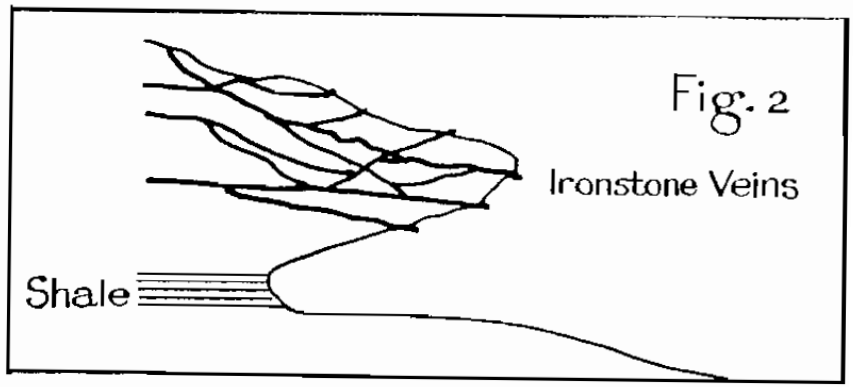


Fig. 2

With Figure 2 a more complex form is noticed. The weak shale band is usually noticed at the base of the cave, but the rectangular outlines have been rather softened. This is found to be due to the extinction of the original rock fissures by the deposition of oxides of iron, which give the irregular hard shells that run through soil and rock near the upper surfaces of the country, following the present-day contour. The roof formed by this reinforced mass is enormously strong, and it is very rare to find one that has collapsed.

Over wide areas there has been a great weathering and shattering of the surface before the concentration of the ironstone veins as the result of solution by rainwater and re-deposition of the iron-containing material from solution. The formation of caves has come at a later stage, through the weathering of material from beneath this latticed surface. In some extreme cases it has been possible for caves to form without the underlying shale, through the destruction of cementing material that held the sand grains below the iron oxide zone. This factor is often present even where it is only one of a number operating.

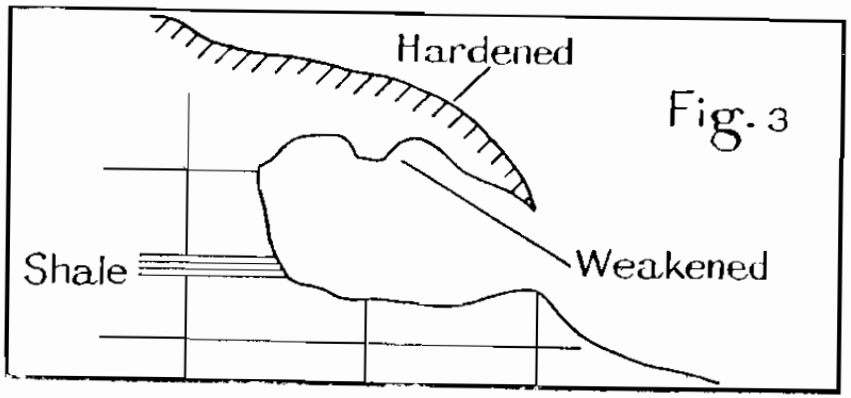


Fig. 3

In Figure 3, we see these factors present in a slightly different manner. The main deposit of iron oxides has taken place on the surfaces of the cliffs and rocks. The consequent strengthening of the outer surfaces, partly by this cause, partly by the removal of lime cementing material from

within the rocks, and its re deposition on the surface, makes the outer portions resistant to the attacks of wind, rain, animals, etc., whilst these agencies hollow out the rock from beneath. Such a cave is almost perfectly protected from the weather by the overhanging lip.

By combining the three types discussed, we get a composite which is common, and uncommonly useful. A high, arched dome, protecting and drip-shedding lip, with a strong reinforced roof, are its outstanding features. At the present time, there seems to be very little active cave formation in the upper levels of the sandstones. Most of the work associated with the iron oxides belongs to the rather distant past, and the rock shelters used by the aborigines have suffered little alteration in shape since their dusky users have vanished.

In conclusion, may I appeal to the walking fraternity to leave the caves without disfiguring friezes by names crudely drawn with charcoal? The vegetation near cave mouths is also worthy of protection, as it is a shelter and windbreak, and it adds greatly to the beauty of the cave surroundings. The nameless gentleman who cut down those trees opposite the cave at the western end of Mt. Solitary might at least attempt to justify his senseless vandalism by using them.

FROM POINT LOOKOUT TO THORA

BY I. BUTLER
(Sydney Bush Walkers)

IT was in the spring on the Northern Highlands, and was bitterly cold. We left the service car and made our way along the road across the Serpentine and slowly on up the hill. Then a stretch of plateau country in which numberless small streams, coming seemingly from nowhere, bubbled and cascaded and tumbled along.

Cliff Mosely owns what is claimed to be the highest dairy farm in the State, right at the foot of Point Lookout, and, in addition, he ranges the New England National Park and cares for all lonely wanderers needing directions. Perhaps, if he had not been there to guide us, we would have still been wandering around in the sub-tropical jungle of the Bellinger, fighting the lawyer vines, monkey-ropes and stinging trees. The next morning he came up to the top especially to direct us. He and his two dogs and Mac and I went to the edge of the precipice and looked out over the promised land beneath us. The Land of Canaan took in everything (almost) from Point Lookout to the Dorrigo Plateau, to Coffs Harbour, a strip of the ocean for some 80 miles to the south, and back to Point Lookout again: most of it steep, evenly graded and densely wooded hills, the main feature being the Bellinger River, with its interlocking spurs, making its way through to the sea some 40 miles away.

The first night we camped just below the lookout. It was bitterly cold and there was a gale blowing from the south-west. Fallen trees and branches from past gales littered the ground, and we slept and shivered in fear.

Track to Antimony Mines

Next morning, after getting our directions from Cliff, we set out down along the track to the antimony mines. On the way along we climbed on to a tiny plateau known as Wright's Lookout. It might be some hundreds of feet below Point Lookout, but it is all bare on top and one can stand and drink in the view from all points of the compass. While we were there some light and cheerful clouds were drifting across the soft blue, giving a corresponding pattern of light and shade on the densely wooded hills.

The first day was little more than a stroll, measured in terms of effort. We camped at the ruins of an old deserted hut, about the only place on the ridge we were following where any water is to be found; even here it would not have been possible to get any, if it had not been for the information which Cliff Moseley had given us—we had to wander down the hill a short distance at a particular place, and then almost dig for it.

The next day was probably the only day of the tour in which we really extended ourselves, but it was a memorable day. First of all we followed the antimony track down to the antimony mine, just because we wanted to see what an antimony mine was like. On the way down we met one of the miners bringing out some antimony on packhorses. He yarned to us for a while and told us of the untold wealth of antimony which was waiting down in the valley to be obtained. He also gave us some directions which, if we had followed them, would probably have left us bleaching skeletons in the jungle of some lonely creek; but we had been warned. We saw the antimony mine, and then back up to the

top—something like Kedumba, and certainly just as much of it. It was fairly easy following the ridge along except in one or two places where we made detours around some of the knobs on the top of it: much of the time, it was almost like walking on a razor edge. The track gradually petered out as we came towards the end of the ridge, and we began to descend. This was all right at first, but the steepness soon became uniform and monotonous at about the nearest grade to vertical at which earth will rest. This went on for hours, and we became hot and thirsty and it began to grow late in the afternoon. If anything, it got steeper, and we slipped and slid and scrambled. As the dusk began to come on we encountered lawyer vines and got scratched and tied up by them. Once I touched a leaf of a stinging tree—can you imagine the worst nettle that you have ever been stung by? Well, multiply that by a hundred and you will begin to have a vague idea of the potency of a stinging tree. Their leaves are large and light green and hairy—but you will learn to recognize them very quickly. It was almost too dark to see when we began to hear the welcome sound of running water down below, and we slid the last hundred or two feet down to the bottom of a V-shaped creek.

There was nothing else for it; we made a rough camp on a soggy, rocky bit of sand, almost in the creek. Everything was so soggy, we couldn't get a fire going. We were too tired to worry very much what happened, but we did think at one stage that the weather looked threatening, and gave a fleeting thought to the fancy that the creek might rush down in the middle of the night and carry us away in the darkness. There was only a slit of sky above us, but the steep walls of the creek were studded with glow-worms which scintillated like so many blue-white stars.

Camp at Creek Junction

On, on, along the bed of the creek through an alley of tropical vegetation dangling long monkey-ropes and covered with beautiful epiphytes. It was rather difficult going, but we took things easily. In the afternoon we emerged on to a beautiful little clearing at the junction of our creek with another one coming in from the north side. No one appeared to have been there for years, but there was an old camp and some fruit trees in bloom; it was such an ideal camp-spot that we immediately decided to stay. That night we slept comfortably and soundly.

From the clearing onwards we were on a fairly good track most of the way: the river (now quite definitely the Bellinger) opened out, and the going was fairly easy. We soon emerged to the outposts of civilization—dairy cows, farmhouses and wild orange trees. We had another camp before we declared the formal end of our trip at Thora.

Measured in miles the whole of the trip was probably quite a short one. However, it was a trip which had some extremely interesting features. Point Lookout is perhaps the highest point on the New England tableland and it is well over 5,000 feet. We descended from this to only a few hundred feet above sea level; from the stinging cold of the tableland to the warmth of the coastal plain; from typical tableland woodland of eucalypts down to sub-tropical jungle of monkey-ropes, epiphytes—and stinging trees.

"LOST AND FOUND"

EARLY in September the Search & Rescue Section of the Federation held practice exercises in the Springwood-Nepean area. Here the wooded and rocky ridges rise from about fifteen feet above sea level to eleven hundred feet high. The rough sandstone country, and the fact that it was practically trackless, made the task of the searchers very difficult.

The area was divided by natural boundaries into seven sections. A party was officially "lost" in each area. Later a Rescue Party was sent out, each to comb an allotted area. Six of the seven "lost" parties were located during the week-end.

Before the Rescue Party could secure the decorated leathern scalp each lost party carried, they had to treat the party for its appropriate "misfortune." One party was starving, others had broken limbs, another needed transport on to the nearest road. These gave added interest to the practice and incidentally made it more life-like.

Radio co-operation had been organised by the Lakemba Radio Club, but owing to Government legislation all amateur transmission was prohibited, and so this section could not operate. Consequently a Flying Squad kept in touch with searchers and base headquarters. The portable radio receivers, however, gave rise to the most unusual sight of bush walkers lying around the campfire on Saturday evening, enjoying a broadcast programme from the Sydney Town Hall.

A fine spirit of co-operation was shown by members of the various clubs, and, in addition to teaching valuable lessons in rescue work, helped to knit more closely that warm fabric of friendship that exists amongst walkers.

Acknowledgments

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