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1945

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The Bushwalker 1945

No. 8

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The Bushwalker

EDITORIAL

EARN YOUR BUSH

When a country is endangered by the greed or carelessness or ignorance of some of its own citizens, then the call to all patriots is to "Fight and Work" to save it. As patriots, bushwalkers have struggled for years to get adequate areas of our beautiful bushland reserved for the enjoyment of future generations of Australians. At first it was an uphill fight, but now we have got the ball rolling and it is only a matter of keeping on pushing, and this we will do.

Blue Gum Forest. Garawarra. Bouddi Natural Park. Heathcote Primitive Area. . . . Reservation is not enough. Preservation of the reserves is needed; and not only of the reserves but of all the bushland in which we love to roam, in which live "the animals Noah forgot," in which grow plants and flowers not known in other parts of the world. To the younger bushwalkers we send out the call to Fight and Work against the greatest enemy of all—THE BUSHFIRE.

Yes, we know the Government appointed a Bush Fires Advisory Committee, and that by hard work it has established over a thousand Bushfire Brigades throughout the State. We know that those Brigades are fighting fires and saving thousands of pounds' worth of property every summer, but we older bushwalkers call on you newer, you young and virile members to take your place in the fight against the fires. We tell you there is a big place, a special place for you in that fight.

You are the people who see what happens when bushfires are successfully diverted from homes and other private property into the gullies and "virgin" bushland and left to burn themselves out. You are the people who see the devastation on the watersheds, the consequent erosion on the hillsides, and then the floodings and scourings and choking of the creeks and rivers.

You know that the bush never fully recovers from a bad bushfire. This year you will do much walking through the devastation caused by fires, but sometimes you will get far out, miles beyond the haunts of mankind, and sometimes you will really see some virgin bush that has grown to full beauty unscarred by fire. Because you know what damage they do to our country, you must join in the fight to prevent bushfires. You must teach your fellow citizens that it is to their advantage to save the bush as well as to save their houses. How are you going to do it?

It will be a big fight. It will need a lot of work for a long time. It will need all the efforts of every one of you, but the fight is worth while. And it is up to you . . . each and every one of you.

Since the beginning of 1942, the Bushwalkers' Services Committee has made regular postings twice a month of magazines, letters, photos, etc., to an ever-growing list of men and women in the various Services. At the end of 1944, it had about 170 members of the affiliated Clubs on its mailing list—and some of the original Committee members were still among the dozen or less workers who do all the mailing. Their club-mates feel that these B.S.C. committee folk deserve special mention for their splendid and sustained efforts, and everyone's thanks in addition to the steady stream of letters they receive from all parts of the world.

If you want to reinforce the Services Committee, see your Club representative.

TO MY SON
(On his fourth birthday)

By COLIN SMITH (Rucksack Club of Sydney)

I pray that you will love the things I love,
That ferns may greet you, wet with dew,
When rising, Sol, his heavenly rays shall play
On virgin bushlands where you choose to rove.

I pray that golden noon may find you resting where
The scent of wildflowers fills the air,
And after, mellow afternoon,
When sunlight's shafts the grassy ridges gild
And bushbirds with their glorious songs the mountain glens have filled.

I pray you find in nature's realm your sacred grove,
Your golden bough the wattle's blazoned branch,
Azurean skies for your cathedral's roof,
Your priestly music, tempests in the trees.

For incense, gum leaves burning on the fire
That cooks your evening meal,
Ere, tired, you take for bed
The earth, your room a sylvan glade,
The stars for canopy.

LINDESAY — BARNEY — MAROON

By RAY KIRKBY (Sydney Bush Walkers)

Soon after crossing the Queensland border, on the first occasion on which I went to Brisbane via Kyogle, I saw on the left three mountains of such height and with such spectacular outlines that excitement bubbled in me like gas in a soda syphon. I fondly thought that the whole of Brisbane must make them their rendezvous, the object of their ambitions and dreams—but found the task of discovering their identity quite formidable. Eventually they were established as the enthralling trinity—Lindesay, Barney and Maroon. That unexpected skyline like the graph of a gambler's income was indelible on my brain, and, at last, came Easter, the apparently minimum time needed for an effective visit.

Lindesay, at least, must be familiar to anyone who has travelled the inland road to Brisbane as the highway crosses the saddle immediately below its ramparts and then runs more or less parallel to Barney and Maroon, though at a greater distance. Theoretically the State border follows the top of Lindesay, but the sheer cliffs make the rabbit-proof fence unnecessary and impossible here, so it has been placed around the base of the mountain. After leaving Lindesay the border runs south of Barney and Maroon, which are an offshoot of the Macpherson Range and wholly in Queensland.

Being only about sixty miles from Brisbane and on a main road, this area would appear to be fairly accessible, yet, on the contrary, the only transport known to me at the time was the Lismore 'bus. This, fortunately, left Brisbane on Friday and returned on Monday, which was unexpectedly convenient, though the loss of two half days irked us considerably. However, we went to Beaudesert on Thursday night, hoping that we might by chance secure some transport early next morning, but our luck was out. Even when the 'bus arrived there was no room, but we responded with alacrity to the driver's suggestion that we ride on the roof. I would strongly recommend this as a mode

of travelling to all as it provides an uninterrupted and undistorted view of the country and is more comfortable than the crowded interior. Fine weather would be desirable and one should guard against overhanging trees such as the one which swept off my glasses, though, fortunately, into the hands of one of my companions.

It was not long before the mountains came into sight in the reverse order to which we hoped to climb them—first Maroon giving confirmation of one of the two facts we knew about the country. This detail was that, although almost surrounded by cliffs, on one ridge "a horse could be ridden almost to the top"; there, sure enough, was the long, easy ridge sweeping to the summit. Then through a gap in the hills, with mouths simultaneously opened in awe and pleasure, we saw the jagged peaks of Barney. The appearance of Lindesay amply reinforced its reputation for difficulty, soaring to 4,000 feet like a tremendous, impregnable fort. The 'bus wound up Palen Creek then commenced the tortuous climb to the border. We scanned Lindesay's cliffs and speculated on where the supposed way up might be, but eventually decided that the two faces so far revealed to us were unscaleable.

About midday we alighted at the border and received an immediate, warm welcome from the gatekeeper. I was relying on him for information but, to my horror, I discovered that he had been on the job only six months and had literally not been from his home more than one hundred yards in that time as he had no relief for his duty of opening the gate. Nevertheless, he gave us some very useful data, mostly gleaned from the few who had attempted the climb during his stay. We ambitiously planned to attempt the mountain that afternoon and Mr. Sanders showed admirable sense in realising the need for economy of time by immediately lighting the primus for tea. Briefly, we stepped off the 'bus, met Mr. Sanders, discussed the climb, had lunched and been invited to stay at the gatehouse and had commenced the climb in exactly one hour.

The way took us first along the border fence through the most beautiful glade country I have ever seen—bright, vigorous gums and long, incredibly green grass, even the light conspiring to impart an aura and softness like a caress. Then, after a mile or so through jungle, we burst into open forest once again where the ascent began up the jungle-clad sides to the foot of the cliffs.

Surely the steeliest nerves must falter before the unknown, formidable climb! Though those cliffs lured and challenged, they caused more than a momentary fluttering of my heart, but, fortunately, one of the party, even if affected, showed neither alarm nor hesitation. One spot was distinctly hair-raising and here, on the return trip, we started down the wrong way, causing me to claim honestly that, rather than continue, I would, if need be, remain on top for the rest of my days.

The top of the mountain is disappointing as it is covered with dense jungle so one must get out to the cliffs to see the views. However, we were fortunate in having good visibility, a rare occurrence, so our eyes eagerly took in the large tracts of glorious country in both States seen by us for the first time. Though Lindesay is just over 4,000 ft. we could quite clearly see the greetings of Mr. Sanders and some guests 2,500 ft. below. The mountain is considered to be something of a climb and the tree, supposed to be right on top, is covered with names in lead and other metals in a manner which filled us with abhorrence. On arriving back at the gatehouse we found that our host had dined early in order to give us carte blanche in the kitchen and we ate heartily—not a little elated that the climb, which we thought might entail days, had been accomplished in an afternoon.

To climb Mt. Barney in a day, which was our next objective, required some thought as we had no leads as to the way up and the climb itself was at least 3,500 feet from the foot to the top, with quite a few miles to cover to arrive even at the base. That was why we left

Lindesay at 9 p.m. and walked down the road, pausing occasionally to look at that unique mountain now tamed and benevolent in the brigbt moonlight.

Has any other walker been mistaken for "an escaped convict"? I am sure that the hungry look and the stubbly beard, the conventional idea of such a person, have not been wanting on many an occasion. Our discoverer had some justification for his views on account of the closeness of the Palen Creek Prison Farm as wc approached Barney next morning by way of Barney View. He was a very burly gentleman on a very small horse and reminded me of Sancho Panza.

Hitherto, from Lindesay, we had seen only the very steep forest-clad sides of Barney, but now we were staggered by the rock faces and the immensity of the eastern side of this 4,400 ft. peak—or, rather, series of peaks, which makes it so fascinating. As we approached we debated the most promising looking ridge on the main peak and came to our decision, but discovered later that the mountain is usually climbed by way of the gully between the highest and next highest peak.

The tent was pitched beside the Logan River with the summit of Barney just showing over the tree-tops, but it was 11.30 a.m. before we were able to scuttle off to begin the climb up the mountain slopes rising straight from the river. As we rose towards the rock walls the vegetation became thinner and the ridge more spectacular until, at one point, it was only about three feet wide and overhanging a tremendous gulch formed by the ridges and the main mass of the mountain.

From the summit the view was stupendous but the feature which most excited me was the great chasms between the various peaks. Any one of these peaks alone would have been worth the effort and yet we looked down for probably 1,000 ft. onto some of these rocky masses which might well be unscaleable. It was four o'clock before we reached the top despite unremitting toil and lack of mistakes, and our reward was ten minutes of clear sky. Then a mist rapidly moved over the mountain and visibility was only partial. We could not have been more fortunate than to have this short period of uninterrupted view followed by the entrancing mystery and change of mist in high places.

As return in the dark by the way we came was out of the question, we chose the shortest negotiable way down the side to reach the river just at dusk, and then two hours' slow progress in the moonlight elapsed before we made our camp. The climbing of Barney was one of the most satisfying and exciting experiences of my life and I enjoyed it better than Lindesay even if the latter is a more difficult though shorter task. On Barney we had to find our own way to the top; on Lindesay the track is obvious even if it leaves no alternative. Those who have followed tracks and have also planned an assault on a mountain with only experience, keenness of eye and brain and physical endurance to pit against waywardness of weather, time and difficulty will appreciate the added exhilaration and the deeper satisfaction.

Next morning we turned our steps towards Maroon, which now to us, on the crest of the wave, had become an object almost of scorn. Its 3,100 ft. seemed paltry and many a joke we had about driving our coach and six up that one gradual ridge. Local authority directed us to the opposite side of the mountain, the top of which was covered in a mist which refused to clear. It was most pleasant having to carry our packs only from base camp to base camp though we had economised in weight but for our little foibles. About the third day we discovered that one of the party, who had a complex about cleaning his teeth, had brought with him four tooth brushes—one for each day!

Most of the mountain was still well wrapped in mist as we started up a likely-looking ridge which ended, however, in steep, dangerous cliffs. Our potential suicide scaled these but did not know whether he was on top and could go no further. The mist showed no signs of lifting so we retreated with our tails between our legs. Next day we

discovered that Kay had reached the top of an isolated peak from which the main mass of the mountain looked unattainable.

Our only chance of climbing Maroon seemed to have escaped us, but Monday was so clear and we so piqued by our failure that we decided upon attempting a dash to the top, this time with further directions, though we had to catch the 'bus miles away at 2 p.m. Once again we had to fall back before overhanging and perpendicular cliffs but, after much sidling, we found a narrow, difficult gap which led to the plateau-like top. This plateau is formed of a light-coloured rock having the appearance of a cooled lava flow, Maroon being described in one book as "one huge block of rhyolite," which may have considerable meaning to geologists. Many of the creeks in the region of these three mountains are so mineral as to be quite undrinkable.

We had attained our object, but with an hour to go we were six miles as the crow flies from the main road and the 'bus, on top of a 3,000 ft. mountain. How to get home was now the urgent problem.

On the road traffic was nil with the exception of one truck, which advanced us nine miles to the township of Rathdowney where the prospect was still most gloomy. Then I remembered that the interstate line is only about a mile from this township and hoped that goods trains might be frequent. Unfortunately they do not stop at the local siding, but the man in charge was willing to ring further up the line and do his best for us. He phoned and, behold, a train was just about to leave but, through some difficulty, we could not be advised whether the driver was willing to pull up for us or not, but we waited expectantly. In ten minutes the friendly (we hoped) polyphemous eye loomed into sight, growing quickly brighter until the engine thundered by with unabated speed. We groaned, we fumed, we cursed. But we had not reckoned on the length of the train—listen to that joyous screeching of the brakes!

ROVER RAMBLERS' BARBECUE
16th-17th September, 1944

The annual barbecue of the Rover Ramblers' Club has come to be recognised as one of the highlights of the year for all bushwalkers. This year's effort proved to be no exception. Although the location had to be altered from the usual site (at the junction of Long Angle Gully and Fitzgerald's Creek) to the Scout Woodcraft site at Pennant Hills because of the general reduction of train services; and in spite of continuous rain on the Saturday; more than one hundred walkers and their friends were able to sample roast mutton a la barbecue as only Rover Ramblers can do it.

On the Sunday finer weather enabled a scavenge hunt and a treasure hunt to be run, and also the traditional tug-of-war. From the proceeds of the function £7 was donated to the Bushwalkers' Services Committee.

TO OUR READERS

Sundry wartime difficulties have again slowed up the processes of producing and publishing the Federation's annual magazine, and again we must apologize for its late appearance. You will remember that Number Seven, although dated "1943," did not reach you until the beginning of 1944. This issue, Number Eight, will be on sale just about twelve months later; the Publication Committee has, therefore, dated it "1945." All our readers who are making a complete collection of "The Bushwalker" are asked to note that there is no "1944" issue, but that the numerical sequence is unbroken.—Editor.

IT HAPPENED ONCE

By "BARNEY" (Sydney Bush Walkers)

Era! How the name recalls early days of bushwalking and the camps and re-unions we enjoyed each year, with packs crammed with gastronomic novelties, and always a number of regular habitues to fraternise with—rain, hail or shine. Do you remember the cold winter camps, the blazing heat of Christmas on the "flat," the motley gatherings round the ever popular camp fire when song and play were given free rein and firewood was all plentiful? There were no week-end huts then and the little tents, like mushrooms, appeared—then vanished, leaving but the sea breeze sighing through the grass clumps and the gum trees and cabbage palms standing sentinel.

Who remembers the Christmas turkey (or was it a duck?) allegedly compelled to walk out to the camp; the various butter cooling devices and meat safes decking the tiny creek under bush and rock; or the great occasion when a much-relieved feminine voice gladly informed the world that ". . . there are no blowflies round," when about to extract a beautifully cooked leg of lamb—then found all the missing blowflies INSIDE the safe? They had to kill that leg before it could be buried!

Did you ever leave town on the "midnight" after attending a party, arriving in camp at 3.00 a.m. Of course you did, for then you were just that age.

We all had our "possies." Some preferred the exclusiveness of "Pott's Point," a somewhat elevated position, while others dwelt on the lower levels, or "Bugville" as they were euphoniously named.

Then came the hiking craze and with it great crowds of Sunday excursionists, and one by one the huts came into being. A few bushwalkers "moved" to North Era before the advancing wave of civilization, and gradually the great trek became an accomplished fact. No more do we meet the old crowd at "Pott's Point" or "Bugville," nor for that matter do we see so very many now at North Era. The little tents spring up now further round the hill at North North Era; and a new generation of bushwalkers collects firewood from those hills, and cools its butter in that creek; but, occasionally, if you are quick, and know their secret haunts, you may run an old timer to earth. He may be a little old man with a long beard, a beady eye and a propensity for scrounging, or perhaps a plump old lady with numerous sun-tanned children. There will be a small tent or two, a cooking fire and (of course) a large billy of tea. You will sit down and say, "Do you remember . . . ." and the beady eye will grow misty and the quavering voice join in, "Ah! that was long, long ago when the visitors' book in the pickle bottle was still on Bulgo—them wus the days!"

And now they want to buy a portion of privately owned land there. I wonder why. Perhaps one day there will be a home for aged bushwalkers at Era and I, who cut my first bushwalking teeth in that happy spot, will trundle my wheel chair across a well-cut lawn and muse with other ancients while a bevy of youthful "prospectives" trot round the tea and cakes and thus become—after twenty years' probation—fully fledged bushwalkers. Who knows?

HEATHCOTE PRIMITIVE AREA

The first meeting of the trustees of the Heathcote Primitive Area was held in the room of the Mountain Trails Club on the evening of 1st September, 1944. The trustees are:—

Messrs. James T. Coleman, representing the Sutherland Shire Council; M. J. Dunphy, representing the Mountain Trails Club of N.S.W. and National Parks and Primitive Areas Council; J. G. Somerville and

H. Whitehouse, representing the N.S.W. Federation of Bush Walking Clubs; W. H. Hall, representing the Sydney Bush Walkers; H. G. Forbes and H. A. J. Donegan, representing the St. George District Boy Scouts' Association.

The area of the reserve is 1,760 acres and, after discussion, it was decided to give it the name of "Primitive Area" thus indicating the objective for which the trustees will aim—to preserve this area as one wherein the bushland will retain its primitive state for ever with no "improvements" of any kind whatever.

It is hoped that this reserve will be a special means for bushcraft training and open air education for the young people of the present and coming generations, where they will by precept and example learn to venerate the bush even as members of the walking fraternity do at present.

—Trustee.

In 1942 the N.S.W. Federation of Bush Walking Clubs organised a deputation to the Minister for Lands to ask for the reservation of four areas of bushland for recreational purposes. Shortage of surveyors is holding up the dedication of the other parks, but one of these areas —the Heathcote Creek reserve was gazetted on 13th August, 1943. The Government and the community are to be congratulated on the fact that the area set aside for public recreation is approximately double that asked for by the deputation.

The trustees appointed to administer this new park have all been interested for a considerable time in the preservation of the area. We congratulate them on their appointment and on their avowed objective of retaining the park as a Primitive Area. We are sure that all bushwalkers will be happy to assist the trustees to preserve this bushland park.

Bushwalkers . . .

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BUSHWALKING — AND HARDSHIP

By G. W. KENYON (Coast and Mountain Walkers)

Our pastime of bushwalking is so different from the common conception of walking that there is a justification for its possession of a distinct title. It involves walking, not only in the bush, but in rugged country where there are no paths, no places of accommodation, and no signposts to direct the way. As a consequence, all the paraphernalia necessary to give shelter and sustenance for the period of the journey must be carried on one's back. A bushwalk may last several weeks; indeed it is limited only by the amount of food which the walker is capable of carrying. (Or the length of the leave he can obtain from his work.—Ed.) All these differences collectively serve to indicate that bushwalking is a much more energetic pastime than walking in its familiar sense. We leave behind the minor discomforts of walking and enter the realm of real hardship when we undertake bushwalking. There are mountains to be climbed; rivers to be crossed; thirst to be suffered; heat and cold to be resisted.

Bushwalking is inevitably associated with long distances. It is only by increasing one's walking capabilities that the remote places can be reached. We are not satisfied with frequent visits to a small area, no matter how picturesque it may be. Some spirit of adventure—perhaps a small measure of that possessed by Ulysses, of whom Tennyson wrote, "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield"—drives us on to greater achievements in endurance. There can be no rest for a body possessed of a mind with a passion for striving and seeking for more adventure, beauty and solitude. On the other hand, one's body strengthens with the increased demands made on it. Neglecting the downhill period after middle age, other things being equal, as time goes on we seem to be able to do a little more, to cover an extra half-mile, as a natural result of the wisdom which develops with the years as patient toil is substituted for the brute force of youth.

Hard walking in itself may develop sore feet and often extensive muscular pain, but an injury seldom occurs. The likelihood of this comes when rocks have to be climbed. In this we have to be prudent. Recklessness and impatience have no place in the make-up of a climber, who has learned that a fall may result in injury of any magnitude. Good climbers do not fall. When Michel Croz was knocked off the Matterhorn ridge by an inexperienced climber, the first thought of his fellow guide, Peter Tangwalder, was that the villagers of Chamonix would think that the great Croz had fallen.

When climbing is undertaken on a bushwalk, it is made harder by the burden of a heavy rucksack which upsets one's balance. It is no wonder, then, that the raising or lowering of the rucksack on a length of cord has found favour! However, this practice has its drawbacks. In taking it off or putting it on, the precious load may slip and disappear, in great leaps, into the gully, shedding food and clothing when the overstrained seams of the pack burst asunder.

Weather determines the success or failure of the journeys of polar explorers and mountaineers, but it is seldom more than a matter of inconvenience to bushwalkers. Nevertheless, stay-at-home folk are stunned at the thought of a night spent in a flooded cave, or of creeping around at midnight, in soaking rain, for a merely damp place on which to erect a frail tent. Rain and hail appear, to the uninitiated, the most serious obstacles to a night of sleep, but experience points to the searching chill of heavy frost. We can recall swinging back a stiff tent flap, as though it were a door, to allow the morning sun to help thaw out the frozen campers—the same sun which we had so often cursed for its blistering heat when we sweated up the dry ridges.

MT. BIMLOW —D. D. Stead (S.B.W.)

KANANGRA DEEP —A. Gilroy (S.B.W.)

SYNCARPIA —J. Wood (S.B.W.)

COX'S RIVER, MEGALONG —R. Cotter (S.B.W.)

There is no greater pleasure than arriving at a far off retreat, or attaining the summit of a high mountain, after an arduous journey on foot. It is also true that the pleasure is much less if similar places are reached without effort. This conclusion is nothing more than the old concept that anything worth having is more appreciated if one is obliged to work for it. Further to this, we subconsciously become aware that the enjoyment of nature is more than gazing at the hills and trees; it embraces feeling the wind and rain, the heat and cold. Bushwalking enables us to see and experience nature to the full; to feel its strength as well as its quietness, its beauty as well as its harshness.

THE CONQUEST OF A CANYON

By R. H. SHUMACK (Y.M.C.A. Ramblers' Club)

"——You will see that it has not yet been done. . . . All those innocents who think to attend this walk, expecting it to be just an ordinary creek-bed trip, be warned!"

So reads an extract from the report of two unsuccessful attempts to climb from Syncarpia Camp through the gorge to Minnehaha Falls, which appeared in "The Bushwalker" for 1938.

Nothing less than a printed challenge and a reward could have offered greater temptation to those of us, young in heart and addicted to the sport of surmounting seemingly unsurmountable obstacles—sometimes called bushwalking. So it was that a party of four "YM" Ramblers decided to try their luck on this obstacle course.

The previous report mentioned 60 ft. drops and unscaleable walls and, as we were not very good at surmounting such things, our party decided to attempt the descent. Armed with 50 ft. of manilla rope, no rucksacks or sleeping bags but plenty of confidence, we left Katoomba on a warm Saturday afternoon in March and proceeded down the creek from Minnehaha Falls.

Progress down the creek was made easy by a wallaby pad that follows the steep-sided stream, winding through rounded hillocks. At nightfall we found a sandstone cave half sealed up by alluvial soil, where we decided to spend the night. With a bed of bracken and the cave roof reflecting the warmth of the fire, we spent such a comfortable night that we began to wonder why we did not do this more often. Waking once during the night to stoke the fire, I saw the most splendid display of glow-worms I have ever been privileged to see. Tier upon tier of these little creatures, in parallel cracks of the cave roof, shone out like the lights of an ocean liner; and in other places, formed broad splashes of eerie illumination.

This is a fascinating cave. From the main creek a little stream of water branches off and flows back into the cave, where it disappears into a hole in its dim interior.

We broke camp at daybreak and continued downstream, until—after covering a mile or two and swimming a pool—we came to a spot where the water disappeared through a hole and fell fifty feet into a rock-walled canyon. At the bottom of the falls lay a dark and slimy-sided pool.

Besides being perhaps a trap, this hole looked most uninviting, so we carried our rope along the left-hand side of the rift, thinking to circumvent it altogether. However, after about twenty minutes along a wallaby pad, we encountered sheer rock walls which someone had marked with a small pile of stones.

We were now about 200 ft. above the creek bed so, retracing our steps, we explored the sloping, tree-covered lip of the gorge until we found a tree which grew from the edge of the walls and overhung a ledge about 30 ft. below. By means of the rope we descended to this

ledge, only to find that our method of releasing the rope did not work. There was nothing for it but for one of us to climb back up, hand over hand, hoping that the release device would not belatedly give way. We used the wood peg and cord method, but the loop was not large enough to prevent the strain from jamming the peg. While attempting for the second time to release the rope, one of the party performed a hazardous feat of rock climbing, released the rope, and climbed down again. We breathed a sigh of relief.

We were again very fortunate in finding a sturdy coachwood tree to use. This time doubling the rope, we descended without mishap to the floor of the gorge.

The paralysing coldness of the water in these gloomy, sunless canyons has to be felt to be appreciated, but the more we felt it during the next part of our excursion the less we appreciated it. Clambering over slimy rocks and swimming through waterholes, we continued downstream. At times, when the water plunged over low waterfalls, we were obliged to jump bodily into pools—not knowing whether to expect to land on a submerged three-cornered rock or to sink feet below the surface.

Finally the gorge opened out and we emerged, teeth chattering, into the heavenly sunshine at Arethusa Falls. When we had climbed to the bottom of these falls—on the roots of a conveniently placed tree —our climbing was finished.

At Syncarpia we had lunch, consisting of one sugared almond and a piece of dried apricot apiece—all that was left of the meagre food we carried—and then we continued up to Blackheath via Rodriguez Pass.

Some conclusions from the excursion—An interesting and novel summer trip, but would be very difficult with rucksacks. A climb up the gorge instead of down seems possible using the same route as we took, but with rucksacks would certainly end in failure.

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COMMERCIAL FORESTS AND PRIMITIVE AREAS

By MARIE B. BYLES
(Bush Club, Sydney Bush Walkers, and Alpine Club of New Zealand)

When Governor Phillip landed in Sydney with his convicts, bread and butter were the first concern and, as there was more than ample timber for building purposes, it interested them mainly as something to be cleared away to permit of cultivation. When, eventually, the timber trade did begin to develop it, too, was interested only in the bread and butter aspect, and conservation never entered anyone's head.

So, although later far-seeing people advocated forest conservation, it was not until 1916 that the forestry baby was born; born of unloving parents into a hostile world. Already the best part of the timber resources of the State had been depleted, and, as if the forestry baby were not sickly enough already, its department was permitted to utilize for constructive purposes only half of the revenue from timber-getting; the rest went into Consolidated Revenue, and still does. Further, although the sawmillers had ravished the country's timbers, they were citizens with rights—as well as votes—and, incidentally, both foresters and bushlovers willingly used the timber from the forests the sawmillers despoiled. Even if the early foresters had had the training, the inspiration and the data, they could not have clamped down on the sawmillers all at once. As a matter of fact, the few conservation-minded foresters of the early days had to start by recruiting others and training them in the ideals and practice of forestry. Not until that was achieved—and it is only partly achieved today—could they turn to converting the sawmillers to the wisdom of conservation.

Although the forester's ideal—that the timber cut each year shall not exceed the amount of timber grown each year—has not been achieved—still progress has been made; there are now many State Forests run as well as limited resources will permit; and some of the sawmillers are beginning to appreciate the forester's ideal.

In some of these State Forests (as distinct from Crown Lands, on which permission is given to cut timber) you can see the result of years of freedom from fire, and the result of so managing the forest that every tree felled is a calculated step to the creation of a new forest. Such forests can be seen in the Manning River National Forest, near Taree, Pine Creek Forest near Kempsey, the spotted gum near Bateman's Bay, and the alpine ash near Batlow. Here the forests are attended as carefully as is possible with the small staff and meagre resources at the disposal of the Forestry Commission. There are water-supply dams, roads giving quick access for fire-fighting, fire look-outs and telephones, and in consequence the forests, or large parts of them, have not known serious fires for nearly thirty years. You may even see an occasional primitive area adjoining the commercial forest and protected by the same fire-fighting services.

Each part of a properly managed forest is cut over fully once in a hundred years, and after that cutting it does not recover its beauty for perhaps ten to fifteen years. In between the full cuttings, there are minor cuttings about once in ten or fifteen years, and after these the beauty of the forest comes back in about three years. As only small areas are cut over at the one time, you never get the impression of general devastation that you do after a bush-fire, and bush-fires often happen on an average of every five years. After a bush-fire it takes anything from two to two hundred years for the bush to recover, according to the seriousness of the fire and the nature of the timber that has been destroyed. If, therefore, we had to choose between tree-felling and fire-protection on the one hand, and a primitive area and bush-fires on the other, there would be much to be said for the former.

To the bushwalker, no commercial forest, however lovely, can equal

one in which the trees are untouched except by the forces of nature; forests in which the trees stumble over the logs of trees which have died naturally and, in the gullies, sink into the moss which covers them. Unfortunately, since white people came to Australia, the devastations of bush-fires have left very few indeed of such forests. After a fire the trees may regrow in a sort of a way, but no one could call it a virgin forest, while to a naturalist the burned trees are like so many maimed bodies.

How, then, are we to preserve our few remaining primitive areas? If they are near tourist centres, the local councils might provide fire-fighting services, but in the outlying districts it is unlikely that any government would make the funds available for this purpose, for it is only in wartime that governments spend money on non-revenue-producing purposes! It may be, therefore, that we shall preserve our primitive areas only by attaching them to the commercial forests with their fire-fighting services.

Apart from fire-protection, the chief necessity is to prevent the primitive areas from being a temptation to the sawmillers, and that can only be done by increasing, not so much the extent of the State Forests, as the funds that are available for managing those that already exist on paper but not in fact. Thus there would always be ample timber available for the sawmillers in forests where systematic regeneration was the rule. Perhaps in the long run we shall have to advocate letting the Forestry Commission have for constructive re-afforestation the whole, instead of half, of the revenue received from timber-getting.

Even in our sadly depleted forests there is still ample space for both the commercial forest and the primitive reserve. The attitude of the Forestry Department towards commercial forests is definitely one of conservation and its previous supercilious attitude towards applying the same principle to primitive areas is changing; but it yet remains to be seen whether it will cherish the primitive areas (museum forests,

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as it calls them) with the same tenderness as it is cherishing the commercial forests; whether it will realize that there is a beauty in virgin bush not to be found in tall, straight, cultivated timber, and that there is a spiritual value in a wilderness just as important to the well-being of the race as the material value of the commercial forest.

ERA

Not far south of Sydney two parks have a common boundary—The National Park to the north and Garawarra Park to the south—but right on the coast they are separated by a wedge of private property some 350 acres in extent. Of its three beaches, Little Garie is in a valley apart, but North Era and South Era have been favourites with bush-walkers for ten or fifteen years past. The surfing is good, the camp-sites are well-grassed, and the hill at the back shuts out civilization.

For some years it was South Era to which bushwalkers wore the track. Then the lessee encouraged the building of a considerable number of shacks, also more and more one-day hikers appeared on Sundays; the bushwalkers felt that South Era was becoming over-crowded. Since then their tents have usually appeared at North, or North-north, Era. Cattle and campers have shared the valleys quite happily, but the bush has shown a tendency to retire up the hill.

Towards the end of 1943 members of the Sydney Bush Walkers decided to buy Lot 7, which covered the whole of North and North-north Era, so that they could do some re-afforestation, and so that they could be sure they would always have it to camp on. The Club gave £100 and various members made donations; soon the fund reached £350 and an agreement was reached with the owners for the sale of the 40 acres at this price. However, the Federal Treasurer refused to sanction the sale at that price as it was above the official valuation. Various discussions and conferences followed. It appeared that the State Government would probably resume the whole area "some day." Then came the suggestion that the funds collected should be offered to the Government if they would resume the whole of the area at once. The Club agreed and so did the majority of the donors. The fund was thrown open to the other bushwalkers and interested bushlovers and soon it again reached the £350. This was offered to the Government through the Lands Department on condition that Lot 7 be kept free from buildings, that the whole area be resumed and added to Garawarra Park, to be held primarily for the use of walkers and campers (without any increase in the number of shacks), and that the representation of bushwalkers on the Garawarra Park Trust be increased.

Meanwhile the Lands Department had placed £4,000 on its estimates for this year for the resumption of Era. We understand that the estimates were pruned by Parliament, but we hope that before long the resumption will take place.

RE-UNION

The Federation's Fifth Re-union Camp was held at "Leonay" by the Nepean River near Penrith on October 28th and 29th, 1944. Ten of the affiliated Clubs were represented and among the dozen visitors was one from the Melbourne Walking Club. In all 150 people signed the Log Book, amongst them two of the Federation's Associate members. As usual, there was also quite a scattering of children present. The place was right; the weather was good and so was the entertainment; the company was excellent—and for the trip home it was possible to get local trains starting from Penrith! Altogether it was a most enjoyable Re-union.

CANOEING THE NEPEAN

By J. P. BLOM (Rover Ramblers Club)

It was meant to be an easy trip from the start although we had been warned about the weirs. However, it was our first canoe trip together and we decided we would have time to become accustomed to one another and the canoe before reaching the rapids below Penrith. How we looked forward to those thrilling moments in store!

We arrived at Douglas Park on a Sunday evening in February with a fortnight's leave ahead of us and were much relieved to find our vehicle awaiting us on the platform although a little alarmed at the small size. This was our first view of the canoe three of us had to fit into by hook or by crook. After taking our gear to the river about a mile away, we returned for the canoe and carried that, too, to the river. By this time it was nearly midnight and we were ravenous, so we proceeded to cook ourselves several pounds of sausages for supper.

The next morning our first thoughts were to try the canoe so we all three piled in without gear and proceeded to paddle off upstream. Our first discovery was the crankiness of our craft, and we very nearly finished up in the river there and then. We discovered the nail holes a few minutes later. Being a tin canoe and not having a soldering iron we had to patch these up with sticking plaster, but the patches served us well to the end of the trip.

After breakfast we had to find a way of fitting all our gear (including rabbit traps), and ourselves, into the canoe as comfortably as possible. This we managed to do with the stern man perched up on the decking, and off we paddled with about two inches of freeboard. To our delight, we found that with the extra load she was much more stable, although it still only required one false movement to ship water over the side.

That day was a delight with the river deep all the way to Menangle and flowing into a steep gorge, the banks being lined with willows and gums. We lazed along in glorious weather all day and were looking for a camp site near Menangle Bridge when we struck our first weir. This was a snare and a delusion, being easy to negotiate as it had a sloping back and it wasn't even necessary to unload the gear. Below it, we were caught for a while in narrow, shallow channels, but soon left these behind and eventually camped about two miles downstream.

The next morning it was raining so we didn't get up until about 10.30 when the weather cleared. We eventually got away about 12 o'clock with the canoe once more loaded to the gunwales. From here the fun began. The map showed a number of weirs but there were at least three times as many as shown. After a while we lost count of the number. Each presented its own problem in negotiation. One would be high and sheer, with steeply-sloping concreted sides, necessitating a long portage of all gear and the canoe to reach the water at the bottom. The next would be low enough to enable the canoe to be lifted over the face. On another it could be slid down the side slopes into the water at the bottom. None was as easy as the first, but one was compensated for by a large blackberry bush laden with luscious fruit.

So the days progressed along the reaches through Camden and Cobbitty. Long stretches of flat water above the weirs, often resembling dark jungle swamps with many treacherous snags and at other times good clear open water. Even this was not to be trusted, however, as witness the time we were gaily paddling along apparently deep water when suddenly we came to a dead stop, nearly throwing us all out of the canoe. In went the paddles to lift ourselves off, but the bottom was out of reach. We had struck a vertical snag with a fork at the top and were perched firmly on the fork.

These stretches alternated with shallow channels below the weirs, often necessitating disembarking, but providing delightful experiences with many overhanging trees or sandy banks to laze and sunbake. Every trunk along the way had its lizard perched upon it, which plopped into the water as we approached, and many was the time we saw the flash of the gaily coloured kingfisher which abounds along these reaches.

But this was not to last, and early one afternoon, after a long, flat stretch of paddling, and completely ignorant of what was in store, we entered the gorge above Bent's Basin, expecting to make the Basin to camp that night. We were quickly disillusioned as we struck the rocks and the portaging began with a nice stretch of about 100 yards. As we progressed, the going became worse, often necessitating lifting the canoe up over rocks 30 or 40 feet above the river. We camped in the gorge that night and arrived at Bent's Basin about midday the next day, taking a day to travel about two miles. With the aid of a tail wind we made up for it in the afternoon by arriving at Wallacia Weir to camp.

Here we spent two enjoyable days on the property of Mr. W. E. Baines, who was inclined to be annoyed at first, but on learning we were Bushwalkers and not tourists, became generosity itself. He even provided tomatoes, apples, potatoes, and, lo and behold, onions. To provide a change from canoeing and to obtain some meat, one morning two of us walked into Luddenham and back. The rabbit traps were set, as usual without success, but in the process a quince tree was discovered which provided us with stewed fruit for some days afterwards, albeit a bit green.

With regret we said goodbye to our friend, and commenced the portage to Norton's Basin and the Warrangamba Junction. This took us all the afternoon, and the next day being Sunday, we decided to canoe to Penrith behind the Skipper's launch. This left us most of the day free and we reached Penrith without expending our energy. That night we camped below the weir on the worst site of the trip. We were getting rather fussy by this time as we had had so many good sites. After spending the morning shopping, we were off again downstream. The great moment had arrived at last. We had reached the rapids and were to enjoy the thrills of shooting them at top speed. We took one look at the first rapid, and our hearts sank. There was about three inches of water, and our craft required six, and the bottom was covered with lucky (?) stones. So we got out and pushed. "Oh, well," we thought, "it will be better lower down." But as rapid succeeded rapid, and each got shallower than the last, we knew we were doomed. We tried hanging on to the canoe and pushing, tying ropes on to it and pulling, and any other combination we could think of. We cursed and we strained, and stumbled over lucky stones until our feet were sore and our backs ached. We eventually reached Fitzgerald's Creek to camp, broken men. The trip was very nearly abandoned that night, and to cap it all, we were charged for camping.

However, the next morning the morale had risen somewhat, and we decided to continue. We had got over the worst of the "rapids" and soon were in open water again. The spirits lifted and a huge watermelon for lunch completed the cure. A gale that afternoon with bushfires on the mountains did not deter us and a perfect camp site was found in good time to get us a prodigious feed and a good night's sleep.

So we continued more pleasantly, open water alternating with small rapids, to Richmond, and then over open tidal water the last 13 miles to Windsor. Here luck turned our way when we struck the tidal water on the turn, and were assisted by the ebb all the way to the finish of the trip. Although we cursed our misfortune at the time, the good parts far outweighed the bad. However, don't ever dare to mention "lucky stones."

Soon afterwards the "gyro" rises perpendicularly for three thousand feet and then bee-lines in the required direction, and, ten minutes later, zooms down on the Barren Lands, settling beside yet another "gyro" with its party of sightseers.

"Well, well, well," gleefully gasps Dad, "if it isn't my old friend Clarrie! Haven't seen you for ten years or so—where are you living?"

The man addressed, equally surprised and pleased with the renewal of his old acquaintance, replies in a matter-of-fact tone that he lives at Adelaide, and had been everywhere by "gyro" in South Australia, the West, and Victoria, so had decided on a week-end trip up the New South Wales coast in an effort to find something really new.

"Well, time's getting on," says the Kempsey-Konangaroo-Barren Lands pilot; "must be getting along home now, else I'll be late for the lodge meeting."

"So long," choruses the quartette. "Thanks a lot for the lift."

"One great advantage of this 'gyro-touring' is that we can 'do' walks in lots of different districts in one go if we meet kindly coves like that one," announces one of the quartette as the four make their way over Saddleback and down to Kiama on their way home. "Just think of those poor cows back in 1940 when they met NOBODY to give them a lift; must have been pretty tough, you know, having to rely on their two pins ALL the time, and without the delightful surprises we're likely to get in future at the hospitality of these 'gyro-tourists'!"

"What say we hire one next week-end and go over to Adelaide and try out some 'stuff' in the Mt. Lofty Ranges?" suggests Number Two, suddenly waxing enthusiastic in contrast to his somnolent condition at Konangaroo.

——I am no Mark Twain . . .

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SKI-ING, 1944

By "KLISTER" (Rucksack Club and S.B.W.)

The winter of 1944 set in earlier than usual with severe temperatures and snow storms giving promise of a repetition of 1943 conditions. As the season advanced, however, reports began to drift through that the quantity of snow was considerably less than normal. The Hotel Kosciusko and the Chalet were still closed so the only accommodation available was that of the huts, and, as these were at high altitudes on the main range, little concern was caused by the rumours. Early parties to the Alpine Hut reported excellent snow, but those from Yarrangobilly, Kiandra and Mt. Franklin (all of considerably lower altitude) were less enthusiastic. As our proposals embraced the Alpine Hut, preparations were continued with placid confidence.

Eventually eleven people with skis, rucksacks and enthusiasm kept the tryst at Berridale one overcast morning in late August. As we watched the dark clouds pile up we were unanimously of the opinion that a rough trip lay ahead. However, as Berridale is only 3,000 feet above sea level and really difficult conditions are rarely encountered below 5,000 feet, we dismissed these forebodings and went about our preparations for the "covered waggon" trip into the foothills.

The route lies across the open Monaro for twenty miles with little in the way of walker interest, but the last ten miles through the Eucumbene and Gungarlin River districts are brimful of enticement. The Eucumbene particularly should prove very attractive both to walker and canoeist, but the Gungarlin would be too shallow and rough for canoes.

Across the latter river lie the Snowy Plains—a large area of undulating, hill-bordered grazing lands at an altitude of 4,400 feet. When snow is heavy the plains are covered, but in their normal winter conditions a few small, scattered drifts only are present. Bill Napthali's palatial country residence known as Snowy Plains House—and now in some disrepair—looks out across the Plains and the Gungarlin River from a shelf on the alpine foothills. Ideally placed, it is a welcome shelter at any time, and here we prepared a light lunch while rain and snow fell intermittently.

Towards 2 p.m. the vanguard shouldered rucksacks and skis and set out in the rain along the track up Teddy's Creek. Fitful bursts of sunshine through the clouds only enhanced the beauty of the heather-clad hills, while a crisp wind reminded us of possibilities beyond "The Brassy."

After a couple of miles the final crossing of Teddy's Creek is made at an altitude of 4,600 ft. and the climb to the "Brassy Gap" commences. The whole climb, with the exception of a short flat at 4,750 ft., is through snow gum and mountain ash forest sheltered from the prevailing westerly winds. It is not until one stands in the Gap at 5,450 ft. that the full force of any weather is felt.

On a calm day the views fore and aft from the Gap are magnificent, but with a blizzard blowing across the Alps no time is lost in pushing forward down the Gap to the Burrungubugge River and the shelter of Kidman's Hut (4,950 ft.) two miles away. It is usual to rest in the hut long enough to have a cup of tea and some refreshments. Our stay, however, was shortened in order to pass "The Diggings" if possible before nightfall. "The Diggings" is an uncomfortable part of McDonnell's Creek which has been torn about in the search for gold. It was our misfortune to lose the race with the daylight and to find the snow-line at "The Diggings," thus adding to the discomfort of a couple of the party who were feeling the stress of the trip.

At the top of the diggings we were met by two skiers who were in residence at the Alpine Hut and they helped with the packs where

most needed. It was a tired party that arrived at Alpine Hut by ski and torchlight about 7 p.m. more or less wet through; but such is the type of animal that visits the Alps that, notwithstanding having travelled all the previous night, after a hot shower and a good meal they were ready for anything.

Alpine Hut at an altitude of 5,550 ft. is situated in a sheltered position at the eastern foot of the Big Brassy (6,600 ft.) and offers probably the most comfortable accommodation on the main range. It consists of a large kitchen-living room, three dormitories, shower recess, ski lobby and work hall, and a large weatherproof shed. It is well heated and insulated, is fully equipped with furniture, bedding and blankets, tools, kitchenware, etc., and has water laid on from Fletcher's Creek nearby.

The first couple of days, as usual, were spent on the practice slopes nearby. Then came the touring. The first trip was to Tin Hut near Gungartan. This is a one-roomed galvanised iron hut about 10 ft. by 12 ft., lined and floored with timber, and has a large fireplace in the south end. It was rebuilt about 1926 and is located in the lee of a clump of trees at the very head of Finn's River Valley at an altitude of 6,280 ft. With the exception of Seaman's Shelter on the Etheridge Range, this is possibly the highest hut in the snow country. It is on a westerly slope and thus exposed to bad weather. The run to and from this hut was made on excellent snow in perfect weather. The route used was via Penerith and the Valentine River Valley, which afforded an excellent opportunity for some ski-skating along the valley floor.

Our next trip took us to Mawson's Hut (6,200 ft.) over on the big bend of the Valentine River some two miles west of Alpine Hut. Mawson's is a two-roomed galvanised iron hut well constructed and lined with insulating board and provides very comfortable shelter. It was built about 1928 for the Australian and New Zealand Land and Finance Co. by Mr. Mawson of Jindabyne and is not associated with Sir Douglas of Antarctic fame. A note tacked over the fireplace and couched in very forceful vernacular tells a colourful story of the severity of the opening of the 1944 winter and how a cattleman and his horses nearly perished.

The view from the doorway embraces the Valentine Flats and the distant majesty of Jagungal. Some very fine ski-ing is available in the vicinity and from the top of the Kerries nearby the whole of the Grey Mare Range and the western snow country unfolds in one glorious panorama. Indeed Mawson's Hut is an attractive centre!

Another trip was made to the south end of the Kerries and Gungartan in order to photograph the Grey Mare Range, Tate West Ridge and Dicky Cooper. Leaving early on a perfect morning, we reached Gungartan for lunch and afterward indulged in a peaceful doze in the sun waiting for the shadows to develop on the cornices. By 3.30 p.m. some very fine photos had been taken, and then we turned our skis downward. How the snow flew out from our skis and the ridges flashed by in that glorious run down! A long ski-skate across the valley floor, a short climb onto Penerith and thence the swish of ski down through the timber to Alpine Hut—a glorious trip!

Several matters requiring our attention toward the end of our stay decided us upon a trip to White's River Hut. Once more shouldering our rucksacks, we left Alpine Hut at 10.30 a.m. and proceeded up Dead Horse Valley and the Valentine Saddle over Gungartan. White's River Hut was reached in the mid-afternoon and the rest of the day was spent in climbing and running off Dicky Cooper. The sleeping accommodation was rather strained that night and the peace of the party somewhat disturbed by the wail of the banshees—in truth a weird night! Next day perfect weather and snow afforded us an enjoyable return trip.

Throughout our holiday the weather was perfect—beautiful sunny

days with perfect visibility. The snow was good and fast and the quantity "just right"—the occasional patches of grass in sunny spots affording excellent dozing spots for indolent skiers or picnic areas for the mid-day luoch.

When not on tour we would take lunch out to some favourable spot and spend the day ski-ing, eating and sleeping in the sun.

Then on the last day—the day we left—it snowed—big white flakes that floated slowly down and covered the earth and trees with a soft mantle of white. Perhaps the mountains shared the sadness that was in our hearts.

MURRELL'S TRACK, NEW ZEALAND

By COLIN SMITH (Rucksack Club of Sydney)

During the War, the majority of bushwalkers have not ventured as far afield as usual, due to shorter holidays, transport difficulties, travel priorities and so on. However, now that the United Nations' war effort seems to be moving to a successful conclusion, one should not be accused of undue optimism if plans are considered for holidays in other states and countries in the near future. With this thought in mind, I should like to advise intending visitors to New Zealand not to waste time and money on cruises and conducted tours which touch only the most easily accessible, and, in many cases, the least picturesque, spots.

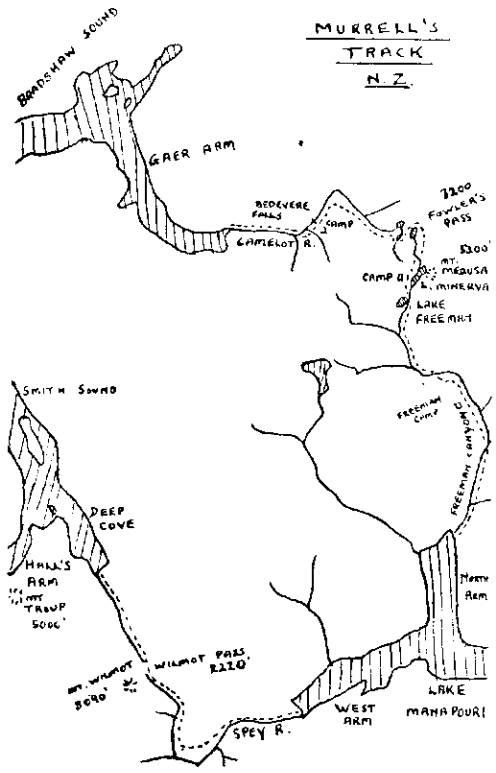
For the walker with only two weeks or a little more to spare a great diversity of scenery can be seen by doing the Milford Walk and Murrell's Track. Milford Sound is one of the show places of New Zealand, and has been visited by many, but Murrell's Track, which embraces the Lake Manapouri-Doubtful Sound round trip, has attracted very few Australians. There is a wealth of scenic grandeur on this trip, covering 170 miles of wild country. The Track was not completed nor were all arrangements made at the various camps when I visited the area in 1935, and the sum of £10 for seven days on the track covered the services of a guide, provision of food and quarters, and the use of sleeping bags at the various camping places.

The track commences at the head of the North Arm of Lake Manapouri and goes up the Freeman Canyon, where the first night is spent at Freeman Camp. Less than a mile from this camp are the Stevens Falls, but owing to the rough going only a handful of people had seen them up to the time of my visit. A strenuous struggle through thick bush and over rotten moss-covered timber where no foothold could be trusted, brought us to the falls. The jungle was thick here and photographs were impossible owing to the flying spray. These falls are remarkable for two reasons, one being that there are no rocky walls or slopes at the sides of the falls, the waters seeming to plunge through the very midst of the mossy jungle for 200 feet. The second peculiarity is that the volume of water never changes. Lake Fowler, which feeds the falls, has two immense logs at its narrow exit and the natural valve so created keeps the flow of water regular be the season wet or dry.

The second day's walk was soft going, still in the Freeman Canyon, but gained in altitude all the time, the biggest climb being at Silver Pine Spur, near which we left the track and visited the Ranfurly Falls, a series of very pretty cascades. As the afternoon drew to a close we reached Lake Freeman where bush-line and snow-line meet and views of the surrounding peaks of ice-worn rock are to be seen on all sides. Another small up-grade and we arrived at Lake Minerva, a gem set in the last grove of trees before the bush gives way to the stunted growths of the snow-line vegetation. At 2,900 feet above sea level the lake is dominated by Mt. Medusa, a

further 2,300 feet up. Here a comfortable camp was in the making. Day closed, and lovely shades came upon the face of the grey rocky summits, and as the sun lighted the tops of the higher peaks beyond and seemed loth to go, we heard the call of the weka, a small, wingless bird, somewhat like the kiwi, its peculiar drum-like notes carrying for miles in the still air.

Next morning we climbed Mt. Medusa, 5,200 feet above the sea level, reaching the rocks below the summit by means of an almost vertical funnel covered with snow-grass, the tufts of which afforded the necessary foot and hand holds. From the summit, Lake Minerva looked like a shimmering jewel far below, and around us we saw peaks innumerable, such as Mt. Tutuko (9,041 feet), Mt. Christina (8,671 feet) and Mt. Elliot, to name but a few. In the canyons below we saw the Blue Lake, Lake Fowler, and Lake Manapouri, which we had recently visited, and other small lakes nestling at the foot of immense rock slides down which great avalanches of stone had fallen to imprison the waters from the melting snow and ice from the mountains towering above them. Along the ice-worn rocks on the lee of the summit, boots were of no use, and it became necessary to don sandshoes in order to negotiate the steep slopes which had been polished by the ice of centuries to a glass-like smoothness. Having crossed the glacier just below the summit, we commenced our descent at the other end of the mountain. The guide had no set plan, as he had not been on this side of the mountain before, but, as daylight was fading, we were pleased when a fine young stag, just below, sighted us and flew headlong down the steep slopes, indicating a comparatively easy way over the rocks and ice-fields to the more gentle slopes near the snow-line.



Next morning we set off again on the track and climbed Fowler's Pass, to the watershed between the East and West Coast lakes and rivers. Here the track went through a steep, narrow chimney, where packs had to be removed and lowered by ropes. We passed Lake Turaki, and then plunged into the bush again, descending for five miles mostly over tree roots, to the Camelot River and Bedevere Falls Camp.

"Here are cool mosses deep,
And through the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppies hang in sleep."

Never have I seen a place so near to Tennyson's description. The fall comes down a deep narrow cleft in the ravine, to cascade over a ledge about 20 feet high, and whirl down a small chasm of polished rock to a large pool floored by multi-coloured stones which create a dazzling effect in the sunlight. Looking straight at the falls is the camp, comprising two huts of mamaku tree fern stems, some of which had taken root in their new positions and were sprouting new fronds, the whole effect being that of an idyllic South Sea abode.

An easy walk of four miles along the river bank the next morning brought us to the salt-water portion of the Camelot River, and here we boarded a dinghy and rowed about a mile to the head of Gaer Arm of Doubtful Sound. Here we lost no time in getting the auxiliary yacht "Constance" under way and sailed with the tide to Bradshaw Sound where about 60 or 70 grampus welcomed us by disporting themselves all round and in front of the boat in formation of four abreast. They accompanied us to the main part of Doubtful Sound, but bade us farewell as we turned our craft into Smith Sound. Soon Wilmot Pass came into view, the most obvious pass I have ever seen. Its height above sea level is 2220 feet and it is situated between Mt. Fowler and Mt. Wilmot which is 5,090 feet above the Sound.

Soon we arrived at Deep Cove at the head of the Sound, 28 miles from the place where we first boarded the boat, and reached the cottage hidden away in the bush close by Helena Falls (900 ft.) whose murmuring voice lulled us to sleep.

Of all the fiord-like Sounds of southern New Zealand, Doubtful Sound is the largest, extending almost 40 miles into the mountains. It is composed of Smith Sound, First Arm, Crooked Arm, Hall's Arm, Deep Cove, Bradshaw Sound and Gaer Arm. Here one can cruise for days and not see a person or habitation of any sort. Here are hundreds of miles of shore line, forest-clad mountains and perpendicular rocky crags, going straight up from the water's edge, in some places to the height of 4,500 feet. Here, too, are waterfalls aplenty, some starting at 4,000 feet and making their way down to the Sound in small falls, others making a leap of 1,500 feet or more.

Early the next morning we boarded the boat again and made for Crooked Arm, the water smooth and the reflections perfect, until we reach the open sound. In Crooked Arm (12 miles long) we cruised all the morning, our craft less than a pin's head in comparison with the mighty mountains, rising here to 5,000 feet all around us.

After leaving Crooked Arm we turned up the Sound again and hoisted the sail, and so reached Hall's Arm in quick time. Here are walls higher than the walls of Milford, groves of immense mamaku ferns, and chiselled summits on either side. Commander Heads, rising 4,500 feet straight up from the water, are well named. At the head of Hall's Arm grey summits rise on every side, Mt. Troup (5,000 feet) dominating the scene. As we emerged Commander Heads at the mouth of the Arm were an even more imposing spectacle than they were on the way in, and we felt infinitesimal beside these mighty works of nature.

Next morning we left Deep Cove, and walked through lovely groves of mamaku and beech trees and climbed Wilmot Pass, from which a view of Doubtful Sound is to be seen, 2,220 feet below and four miles away; then to the Spey Valley, a view very much like an Australian mountain view—wooded hills folding in to each other as they sweep down to the river. We then went along the river bank

to the head of Lake Manapouri, after traversing an excellent track of 13 miles in four hours' walking time. Here a launch awaited to take us down this lovely lake of many islands, a fitting conclusion to a marvellous trip.

THE TIMBER SHORTAGE IN NEW SOUTH WALES AND PROTECTION OF PRIMITIVE AREAS

Bushwalkers long to be able to say, "Hands off the trees except in the State Forests where re-planting is the rule." The Federation therefore asked the Forestry Commission whether it needed more money, more men, or more land to enable it to supply the whole of the timber needs of the State from the State Forests. Then, if it had all it wanted of these things, how long would it be before we could reasonably cry, "Hands off the trees except in State Forests!"?

The following is the reply received from the Forestry Commission. Perhaps it will give us some idea of the shocking devastation of our forests that has been going on, and must continue to go on unless we give up wanting houses and furniture as well as other things.

"(1) Proper forest management would be impossible without the equivalent of the whole of the royalties from timber being handed over to the Commission. Actually in 1941-42 the forest revenue was £393,201, and the expenditure £528,393, but this expenditure includes little reforestation, which has been suspended for the period of the war. The programmed expenditure, post-war, is on the scale of £2-3 million per annum, against an anticipated revenue of £300,000.

"(2) Owing to excessive alienation in the past, the existing forest reservation is inadequate to maintain the native timber industry. Indeed, sawmills, post-war, will fall out in large numbers.

"(3) If the Forestry Commission had the money, and the land, and the staff—it would take at least 50 years to recover the situation.

"Taking the Clarence Region for example; of 3,000,000 acres in the five shires, 500,000 acres are reserved for the timber industry—the chief industry of the region—and of the 2,000,000 acres alienated, only one-eighth is under crop or grass—the rest is despoiled forest."

The Forestry Commission added the following as its attitude to primitive areas:—

"The Commission gathers that the Bush Walking Clubs are concerned to retain primitive areas. The Commission's solution of this need would be to define areas within broad National Forests, these areas to be retained in a primitive condition.

"It is futile to declare areas primitive unless they be protected from fire. The Blue Mountains and the Hawkesbury Sandstone areas are largely fire-wrecked areas—but the nature lover generally has been unconcerned to remedy this default of policy.

"The Commission's policy is an over-all one, to cater for all community needs for the multiple service provided by forests—from timber supply to forest recreation.

"In Queensland, for instance, both National Forests and National Parks are managed and protected by one authority, viz. the Queensland Forest Service, each for its dedicated purpose.

"Even managed forests contribute amenity, as for instance, although in Europe the primitive Oak and Beech forests no longer exist, the man-made pine woods still occasion poesy. The New South Wales policy, however, would be to retain primitive areas within the pattern of protected woodlands.

"The Bush Walking Clubs could help best by defining areas of scenic content worthy of retention in the primitive."

FLINT AND STEEL —S. Cottier (C.M.W.)

WARATAH —D. D. Stead (S.B.W.)

ROBERTSON —T. Coffey (S.B.W.)

"INNISFREE"

By TOD SLOANE (Rucksack Club, Sydney, N.S.W.)

I'm getting too old for Bushwalking. In the words of the Poet—

"I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there——"

Then, later on in the same verse, the Poet continues:

"And I shall find some peace there,
For peace comes dropping slow——"

It will be wonderful to have peace after carrying that heavy rucksack up all those steep hills, through all those creeks and rivers, over all those big rocks and through all that thick, scratchy scrub. I'll do a lot of resting and thinking, and, in the words of another Poet—

"I'll think of a thousand things and taste them slowly,
One after one."

Then, I'll wonder why I didn't build this cabin years ago. Why did I spend all those years Bushwalking? All those strange years, when I could have attained to all this peace, for, as the Poet tells again of Innisfree—

"Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade."

But I spent all those years Bushwalking. WHY?

Well! well! Let us turn again to my friends, the poets. Perhaps they can throw some light on the matter. Here's one who says:

"I have seen dawn and sunset on moors and windy hills
Coming in solemn beauty like slow old tunes of Spain."

Another says—

"Give me a long white road and the grey wide path of the sea."

And yet another—

"Only the road and the dawn, the sun, the wind and the rain,
And the watch fire under stars, and sleep, and the road again."

So you see why I quote these poets. Although they are overfond of roads, of which the Bushwalker is not overfond, they express the spirit of seeking beauty and adventure in distant places and of the love of the road for its own sake. The Bushwalker has identical ideals, but he puts his own interpretation upon them. He wants his moors and windy hills to be so inaccessible that only his fellow-bushwalkers can share them with him, and he wants his roads to be tracks and not necessarily good ones.

Briefly, these are the reasons why I spent all those years Bushwalking. But were there not others also? Yes, lots of others. I have only used the poets to illustrate basic principles. I was interested in the birds, the animals, the flowers, the rocks, and all that is in the bush whatever. Also I wanted to live the life of all the other Bushwalkers —their not-so-easy life, for Bushwalking is a hard pastime. Its devotees are acquainted with trouble. I have lost much of the skin of my shins attaining to dawns and sunsets on very wild moors and rugged windy hills, and I have got very tired doing it—far too tired to sing, as do the carefree, track-bound Hikers. As someone who is not a poet has said—

"One of the differences between a Hiker and a Bushwalker is that Hikers sing when they are coming home, while Bushwalkers are too tired."

Then, of course, I always had the urge to go exploring. That the country had previously been explored did not worry me. I wanted personally to explore it—always hoping to come upon some totally untrodden spot. I do not know if I ever succeeded in this, but I certainly reached places where I knew that no one had been for a very long time nor would be again for a long time. This gave me a lot of

satisfaction—but my shins suffered and I was too tired to sing on the way home.

There were a lot of nice things too, in all those long, strange years. Swinging along with a well-balanced rucksack in high, open-forest country; and the calm of sheltered camp sites beside swift streams. There was the noble cameraderie of your mates, brave and fair; and the nice things you could cook at your firesides. At night there was the secure comfort of our little tents; and there were glorious summer days when we remained at our camps and swam in the velvety coolness of deep freshwater pools, or lay on smooth rocks and felt the ripple of the little winds as they flowed over us.

All these are more reasons why I went Bushwalking for all those years. Through it all I sometimes felt that I really belonged to the bush and that town life is not the real life, but one forced upon us by circumstances. I think that all Bushwalkers get this idea at some time or other. Someday a Bushwalker Poet will arise and express it in majestic cadences.

. . . . . .

Yet, I sometimes wonder if I will ever go to Innisfree.

CENTRAL NORTHERN MOUNTAINS

By A. L. WYBORN (Sydney Bush Walkers)

The Warrumbungles! How often in the last few years had I thought of these volcanic ranges. Little known to walkers, they beckoned like mystery castles inviting one to come and explore. Many difficulties, such as drought and transport, had prevented us from seeing them. But now, in early spring, at last we were on our way there, our appetites whetted by the enthusiasm of a few other club members.

Of course we would not attempt to climb the Spire, the Needle, etc.; our objects would be to see as much as we could in a few days, take record photos, and check some doubtful points in the topography. Later, a close view of certain of these peaks convinced me that no matter how long I had, I would never climb them.

At Binnaway we were greatly excited to see in the distance the sharp blue contours cutting the skyline. They were certainly much closer now than when I saw them last Easter from the Liverpool Range near Scone. Coonabarabran, 315 miles from Sydney, is a thriving town at the junction of the railway and the Oxley Highway, the latter linking the east and west of this part of New South Wales. This means of entry to the Warrumbungles was chosen partly because of the added attractions on this side, but mainly because it was nearest for transport.

The Central Northern Slopes around this region average only 900 feet in height. Running east and west across the plains, the Warrumbungles reach their highest parts about twenty miles west of Coonabarabran, elsewhere they are relatively low. We were taken out twelve miles by car, passing Timor Rock on the way. Leaving the car, we cut across from Shawn's Creek to the Castlereagh River, both of which were running well, and skirted the huge mass of Mopera Rock to camp on the very source of the Castlereagh near Mopera Gap. This gap goes through the range connecting the main Warrumbungle Range to the isolated Warrumbungle Mountains. Toward these latter we headed, as all the most interesting formations are to be found there. Incidentally, through Mopera Gap a road has been surveyed which will provide good access to the proposed National Monument, and materially shorten the distance through to the west.

First we must climb to the highest point, just over 4,000 feet, to spy out the land, and decide what else to do in our limited time. This mount unfortunately has three names. Exmouth was the original, but

sounds very English; Terra Terra is the local name, and Wombelong is the name of the aboriginal tribe that dwelt in this area. We called it Wombelong, for it sounded quaint and Australian. Going down Wombelong Creek, with its rich green pastures, we struck up Burbie Creek and had a long climb to the top of Mt. Wombelong. It would be difficult to find a more extensive cyclorama, and we spent quite a time picking out all the landmarks, the greatest among which were the Nandewar Ranges rising to 5,000 feet, 105 miles away beyond Narrabri. Walgett on the Darling River can also be seen from here. Closer at hand spires and bluffs were plentifully sprinkled throughout the ranges. Mt. Tonduron, or "The Spire," catches the eye as being one of the most striking. It looks like a huge moulded jelly, with its purple cascades of lava and streaks of brown and green.

Descending from Wombelong, we started along the top of the range eastward, and found the going very slow, because of the many ups and downs. There is no doubt that the valleys afford the easiest way of progress in this country, as the ranges are a series of steep volcanic peaks. It is so different to the Blue Mountains and other places where we have learnt to "stick to the ridge." We had to skirt a difficult peak before leaving the range, and in doing so came under that sheer precipice, the Bluff Mountain. We estimated the drop at 1,500 feet, it being, I think, the greatest in these parts. High up in these lofty walls is the perfect eagles' eyrie. Indeed, two of our party next day looked down on at least seven wedgetails, wheeling and soaring vertically only a few feet away, and close to the top of the walls. The route back to our base camp was down Spirey Creek, so named because of the framed view of the Belougerie Spire from its lovely lower stretches.

Next day, two of the party decided to climb the Bluff Mountain, whilst the remaining two went to make closer acquaintance with the Spires. After going a short way, imagine our surprise when we came upon a very comfortable home, set in the midst of the Warrumbungles, yet replete with all mod. cons. We were received with great courtesy

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by Mr. and Mrs. Pincham, who gave us directions, and expressed warm approval of the National Monument scheme.

As we went on there were elusive views of the Belougerie Spire, each seeming to magnify its size, until we stood directly below it on the site of Captain Hurley's camp. Going up on the right-hand side of the Spire, we reached the top of the range, and stood transfixed at the sights which surrounded us. Belougerie Spire rising out of one side of the ridge, and Crater Bluff—a bare half mile away on the other side—stood like sentinels of the range. These trachytic plugs have walls 600 and 1,000 feet high respectively where their outer sides emerge from the ridge. When one ponders the aeons necessary for the erosion of the igneous matter from their sides, there must be good reason behind the contention that Australia's "stumps" are among the oldest on earth. Near here we saw many varieties of wildflowers, and came upon a solitary example of the beautiful caladenia or spider orchid.

Just a few hundred yards from the Belougerie Spire is the start of the Breadknife, that remarkable dike which to many is the most intriguing of all these geological marvels. In its fullest extent, it is three-quarters of a mile of sharp, jagged ridge, the rock wall being more exposed at each end. At the higher end, that part of the formation which seems to defy gravity, leans over at an angle of six degrees. At no part thicker than twelve feet, the length of seven hundred feet has the astounding height of four hundred feet. On the top, a lone pine tree has a precarious existence, seemingly growing out of the rock.

Features such as these, and many others also, will be preserved for all time by the proposed Warrumbungles National Monument; otherwise man-made erosion and thoughtless lack of appreciation will hasten their disappearance.

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COME NORTH WITH ME

By ALAN HARDIE (Sydney Bush Walkers)

While serving with His Majesty's Armed Forces in the Northern Territory, I have plenty of time to reflect on the future possibilities of bushwalking, when once the war is over. Even before the war, we were on the brink of a new era of development. The more luxurious club members (like myself) preferred to start out in "Sunshine" parlor-coaches, whilst others, of a more enterprising spirit, negotiated trips by air-liner to the southern parts of Queensland and the northern, scenic regions of Tasmania. Even then we were coming to realise the advantages arising from the annihilation of space.

Now, with the advent of the massive bomber able to accomplish over three hundred miles to the hour, and the more modest troop-carrier averaging over a hundred, we are arrested with the thought of what civil aviation may attain to when, with the cessation of hostilities, all these immense resources are diverted to civilian needs. It must mean the democratization, popularisation, and inevitable cheapening of air-travel; and in this new order the humble bushwalker must vie with the rest for his share of the general advantage.

Then, what will be the outcome of all this? Well, it means that in those haunts where we now serve His Majesty's pleasure, we shall be able to serve our own pleasure. Instead of a vision limited to the Blue Mountains, as beautiful as they are to those who have not seen much else, we shall be able to envisage the Kimberleys and the McDonnells as being within our ken and easy reach. Though myself a native of Sydney, born and brought up in the environs of the southern capital, yet I have no hesitation in saying that only those who have been in the Tropics know what sunlight really is. And with the brighter rays of the sun come the colour-effects that are lost in the regions of lengthening shadows. At three o'clock in the afternoon in the month of June, if a visitor to the Blue Mountains looks out over a panorama, the sombre shadows already appearing have the effect of giving him a feeling of depression and melancholy. Not so the vista that rewards the climber of an eminence in these tropical regions at the same time of the day. Rather is he confronted with a phantasmagoria of varying shades of greenness, merging in the purples and mauves of the far distance. Nowhere is there a shadow to mar his sense of uplift and exaltation. Yet I hear men in the Army sighing to return to Sydney. All I can say is that there must be a very, very pretty girl waiting for them to compensate for all this.

The irony of it all is, that before we leave Sydney to come here, we have to bear the agony of needles and inoculation against tropical diseases, when all the time we are leaving behind us phlegmatic, catarrhal and pneumonic Sydney, in order to enter the realms of sunshine and good health.

Yesterday being Sunday and our day of rest, I followed my usual practice of climbing up one of the hills near our camp. Incidentally, these hills are not high enough to be called mountains, yet they command a far, distant view. On looking out over the ocean of green tree-tops to the multitudinous peaks on the remote horizon, I thought of the fun a party of bushwalkers would have in identifying these peaks, as, with their map stretched out on the ground and orientated according to the compass placed in the middle, each in turn ventured his opinion to the adjudication of the others. But, I thought, these peaks have no names, except such as have been given by Army authorities to convey some military significance. Then would it be necessary for the pioneers to come through first of all, and to endow names akin to the Mounts Morriberri and Milo and Debert's Knob of Blue Mountains fame. After these would come the succeeding genera-

tions of those who viewed, scanned, recognised, and appreciated their forefathers' gift of invention.

How fallacious is that appellation, "The Empty North"! Politicians have even had the effrontery to suggest that it could be peopled only by the coloured races, including our mortal enemies, the Japs. The heat was so intense, they preached, that only negroes and orientals would be able to eke a living out of the unyielding soil. Yet I have seen more fauna in these parts than ever I did down south. They can live only because there is the vegetation for them to feed on. Rabbits are certainly non-existent, but kangaroos, wallabies and wallaroos seem to move around in colonies. They cannot quite make us out. At first they leap away after a warning note like the sound of cloth being torn, but they do not go far before they stop, turn round, stand motionless, and with ears erect and paunch protruding, like the caricatured capitalist, they comically seem to ask, "What on earth are you doing here?" Moreover, I have seen mustangs as well-built and graceful as the equine specimens frequenting the Thredbo River country. Despite the prevalence of bushfires, bird life thrives. The trees, especially in the early morning and twilight, abound with chattering magpies and black cockatoos, and such-like birds of the larger ilk. An owl occasionally peeps into my tent at night-time. Even an eagle has been shot down in the precincts of one of our camps. While strolling over the hills I have come across a bower-bird's nest, with an entrance paved and an interior lined by means of the bones of animals cleaned to an alabaster whiteness, together with sea-shells which must have come a distance of at least fifty miles. Where there is water—and such places, I can assure you, are now very scarce—the spot is indicated by denser vegetation and vividly green palms; and here one finds a veritable aviary of the wrens and thrushes of the smaller creation.

What is noticeable most of all in the north is the remarkable resilience to bushfires. In the Blue Mountains the bush never seems to recover from a large-scale fire: the bird-life becomes extinct, and charred trees remain. But here, within a week, where before there was long, dead grass, a new greenness reappears, like the "filmy veil of greenness, which thickens as you gaze" that the Australian poetess, Dorothea Mackellar, referred to in her poem, "My Country." In fact, the bush looks better after a fire than ever it did before, for then you have autumn and spring appearing in harmony together: leaves, scorched and sallowed by the fire, either remain on the trees or lie in profusion underneath on the ground, still retaining their original shape, while beside them, or hovering above them, are the new leaves, transparently green in the bright sunlight, triumphantly seeming to hold out the challenge of immortality.

One naturally asks, "What is the reaction of the Army man to this environment?" I regret to state that not only city but country-bred individuals have no greater interest in the natural fauna than through the sight of their rifles. It is marvellous what silly excuses they invent to justify their wanton destruction of animal life. If they shoot a kangaroo, it is not even for the purpose of realising on its valuable pelt, but the carcase is left to rot in the tropical sun. Often the peaceful solemnity of the valley is disturbed by the reverberations of a rifle-shot and, when I am out walking, my only dread is that I may stop a .303 round intended for some hapless marsupial. That is why I look forward with optimism to the time when it will be practicable to include these haunts in the itinerary of a walks-programme. Then they will be open to those who appreciate and work for the preservation of our natural flora and fauna, and who shoot birds through a camera only.

After the rainy season—which lasts for the first three months of the year, and during which the sun seldom appears—the ground quickly dries up. Whereas down south the country homestead has tanks erected on high platforms to catch the merciful drops from heaven, up

here the converse takes place. Bores are sunk deep down into the ground to tap some subterranean stream. Without them our Army life would be impossible.

There are, nevertheless, natural watering-places scattered over distance, like oases in an African desert. The trouble is in locating these and indicating them on a map. To reach such places the concepts "forced march" and "moonlight flit" would come into their own. However, despite the greater heat of the tropical sun, North Australia has advantages which more than compensate for the temperate conditions of the south. Paddy Pallin's lightweight camping-gear would become lighter weight, because—outside the wet season—there is never any rain and, consequently, there would never be any need to carry a tent. A mosquito tent would be all that was necessary—for keeping out insects in the lower, and dew in the higher, regions. Moreover, though the day be hot, there is always the night for making up the leeway of distance. What I said before about sunlight in the Tropics applies equally to the moonlight. No moonlight can so transform things, so turn night into day, as the tropical moon does. Moving in this second day, fatigue is out of the question. Even when there is no moon, the stars have a greater lustre than we are accustomed to in the south, due, no doubt, to the extra reflection provided by the stronger sun. When one's eyes are not dazzled by the headlights of Army trucks, it is quite possible to follow bush-tracks on a moonless night without the aid of an electric torch.

For the geologically-minded, the north of our continent is teeming with interest. Notwithstanding the long grasses, the ground is covered with stones; and rocky gorges are reputed to have rock deposits of wolfram, as yet unexploited. Nor would there be any need for enthusiasts to carry a hammer and to rap along the way, for the stones upturned by one's feet emit a metallic sound. They can, like myself, look forward to the post-war period, when the remote north-west will, through being brought nearer to home, become the abode of the bushwalkers.

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SEARCH AND RESCUE

By J. H. WATSON (Rover Ramblers Club)

Not once but on several occasions in the past eight years has the phone rung about teatime for members of the Search and Rescue Section of the Federation; lifting the receiver, a familiar voice is heard, "Hello! Paddy speaking. There's a party overdue; can you get out tomorrow?" In every such instance, the Section has been able to furnish valuable assistance.

The need for an efficient organisation for search and rescue work was first realised in 1936 following the big Grose River search. A party of four Sydney hikers had set out over Eight-Hour Week-end to journey down the Grose from Blackheath to Richmond; by the following Friday grave fears were entertained for the safety of the missing youths, for whom planes and land parties (led by police) were conducting a search. Following a meeting of members of the various walking clubs of the Federation, convened by Paddy Pallin, an offer was made of a search party to enter the Grose Valley from Faulconbridge.

Some eleven walkers then caught the Mudgee Mail as far as Faulconbridge, to move off at 12.30 a.m. and stop for the night at 2.40 a.m. just above the river. Up again at 5.30 a.m. on the Saturday to descend to the Grose for breakfast and then move upstream to find a cave marked with the names of two of the missing lads. Nearing Linden Creek we heard the planes roaring up the valley and attracted their attention; they thought we were the missing party until we signalled to the contrary. We reached Wentworth Creek at midday to find that the police had been through the same morning. As the afternoon wore on, lack of sleep on the previous night began to exact its toll and we made camp at 5.30 p.m. as another plane passed over. We lit a smoky fire to attract attention and on the return journey the plane dropped four paper bags to signify that the missing party had been located. Thereafter chief interest was in the speediest means of leaving the valley.

We continued upstream on the Sunday and about 8.30 a.m., beyond Porcupine Creek, we met three bushmen from Bilpin who had descended via Tomah Creek; they informed us that the police were taking the missing youths back to Blackheath, and gave us notice of an easy way out along the spur between Hungerford and Porcupine Creeks. We followed this route and, after some bother with bushfires, reached the Bell Road at 1 p.m. and followed it to Bilpin for lunch and a wash. Thoroughly refreshed, we returned by car to Kurrajong for the train home.

The Search and Rescue Section then came into being and its first call to take the field came in January, 1938, when two hikers were reported missing after their failure to return from a hike through the bush near Heathcote on a Sunday. The request for assistance was received at 5 p.m. on Monday and at 4 a.m. Tuesday eight members of the Federated Clubs met at Railway Square to travel by lorry to Heathcote. We ate and drank; meanwhile the police and relatives of the missing pair had arrived.

After consultation, the police and relatives moved down the regular track and Goondera Ridge. The lorry continued along the Highway to drop walkers in pairs to descend Gooingal and Kangaroo Ridges and to cross Uloola Heights. Two of the parties converging at the junction of Goondera Brook found a note to the effect that the missing walkers had proceeded downstream; hastening downstream, they found that the lost hikers had already been located by the police and relatives at Karloo Pool.

N.S.W. COASTLINE —D. D. Stead (S.B.W.)

ON THE RIM —S. Cottier (C.M.W.)

KOSCIUSKO—SUMMER —R. Cotter (S.B.W.)

KOSCIUSKO—WINTER —J. Noble (N.S.W.)

The activities of the Section commenced to arouse considerable interest among the various clubs, which in some instances arranged club exercises, used pigeons as message-carriers, and gathered some valuable data. In August, 1938, an extensive exercise was carried out in the area between O'Hare's Creek and Prince's Highway with about sixty searchers covering the allotted sections—and finding the "lost party." A subsequent valuable exercise operative from a base at North Springwood also attracted much attention.

With the outbreak of war, walking activities were restricted and the Search and Rescue Section (many of whose members were serving at home or abroad) was not called upon to assist the police in finding lost hikers. With the recent improvement in the war situation and the resumption (despite travel restrictions) of walking in its various forms, it has been considered opportune to quicken interest in the activities of the Search and Rescue Section of the Federation.

Further valuable experience was gained in a recent exercise and it is hoped that the support so readily accorded the Section by members of the Federation will continue—and so enable it to operate efficiently should the call again arise. Volunteers should register with their Club representative, or direct with Paddy Pallin.

THE N.S.W. FEDERATION OF BUSH WALKING CLUBS

This Federation was formed in 1932 mainly so that the various clubs could speak with one voice on matters affecting the preservation of the bush. Throughout the years of its work for conservation it has grown steadily stronger, and even the serious depletion of club memberships through war service has not stopped its work.

Probably the most important work of the successful year ended 30th June, 1944, was the organisation of a Petition for the Prohibition of the Sale of Wild Flowers and of the representative deputation which presented this petition to the Minister for Local Government. Over 3,000 signatures were obtained from people of varied interests, and considerable support was given by the daily press. The Federation also approached various large shops and asked them to assist in protecting our native flora by stopping the sale on their premises of cut wildflowers. Woolworths Ltd. and Anthony Hordern and Sons Ltd. responded and have since been selling cultivated flowers only. It is hoped that before long an amending Act for the protection of Australian Wildflowers and Plants will be brought before Parliament.

We quote from the concluding paragraph of the Annual Report:—

"There are two aspects of the year's work to which attention should specially be drawn: (a) The happy contacts that have been formed with the Lands Department, with the Metropolitan Water, Sewerage and Drainage Board, and with the Forestry Department. It is felt that if we can reach an understanding with these departments far more will be accomplished than by innumerable letters of protest. (b) The large amount of work that has been accomplished because individuals have taken up specific jobs and carried them through. . . . If more people would take in hand some specific matter, there is no limit to the work that could be accomplished."

At 30th June, 1944, the Federation consisted of twelve member clubs, though three of them are virtually in abeyance until the war is over and their members return from the Fighting Forces or from war work in other parts of Australia. Since the beginning of July three more clubs have affiliated with the Federation. These are the Y.W.C.A. Walking Club, the Blaxland Bush-walkers' Club and the S.T.C. Bush-walkers' Club.

Sometimes people ask, "Why are there so many bushwalking clubs?" Each club has some special feature and fills a particular need in the fraternity. Here are a few short notes on some of the clubs which we have obtained from their honorary secretaries.

The Bush Club was formed in September, 1939, and its Constitution starts with a preamble that physical fitness shall not be an entrance test. The idea was to cater for all classes of walkers without asking for any tests. It does in fact number in its ranks very able and strenuous walkers and campers who were formerly mountaineers in Switzerland. Its members are mainly over 30 years of age and, as some have children, family parties are not unknown. Membership is open to persons over 16 years of age. The club meets socially once a quarter in the homes of members and has organized walks once a month. At present the subscription is 2/6.

Hon. Secretary: Mr. E. Heilpern, 20 Redan Street, Mosman.

President: Mrs. A. Duncan, Castlecrag. JA 7417.

The Coast and Mountain Walkers of N.S.W. is open for application for membership by any persons actively interested in bushwalking. A meeting is held each Thursday at 38 Clarence Street, Sydney, for which a social programme is arranged—including at least one lecture per month on some subject of interest to nature lovers. Club walks are held each week-end and a schedule is arranged of walks commencing either Friday night or Saturday afternoon. The standard of walking ranges from easy camping trips to the more arduous Friday night or long holiday week-end trips when it is desired to reach the more inaccessible places. A knowledge of map reading is considered essential before membership will be accepted. A quarterly magazine, "Into the Blue," is published by the club and the active membership is approximately thirty. Annual membership fee is 15/-.

Hon. Secretary: Miss Daphne Ball, 11 Trevanion Street, Fivedock.

Y.M.C.A. Ramblers.—This club is attached to the Young Men's Christian Association of Pitt Street, Sydney. It is primarily a bushwalking club, catering for all tastes as it has both tough and easy walks, also camps. The programme is made out for fortnightly walks, most of which are day-and-a-half trips. Meetings are held fortnightly at the Y.M.C.A. and each meeting covers some social event.

Acting Hon. Secretary: Miss Betty Royal.

The Rover Ramblers Club.—This club, which is now in its thirteenth year, is a men only club, and is open to members of the Boy Scouts Association. For those who are not familiar with the details of the Boy Scout organisation, the Rovers consist of men aged 17 or over. Normally, Rovers function as crews in the various suburbs or districts, and also as Cub Masters, Scout Masters, Instructors and Examiners to Scouts and Cubs. The Rover Ramblers were formed to give Rovers unattached to crews, or working with Scout troops, the chance to engage in bushwalking and camping with other Rovers in the same position. Although membership was badly hit by the war, the numbers are again on the increase, the figures at the end of 1944 being more than 20 members in addition to the 17 men in the services. Two week-end walks are held per month, and an annual barbecue (described elsewhere in this issue) is a highlight of the bushwalking year.

The W.E.A. Ramblers Club has for its chief aim the study of bush-lore generally and plant life especially. It differs from other affiliated clubs in that distance is not a feature of the rambles, which usually consist of six to ten miles, much time being spent on each walk in the observation of particular species of bush plants. Seasonal walks are arranged in directions where particular varieties are in evidence. In this way social activity is combined with increased knowledge and appreciation of Australian flora. Meetings are held on the third Sunday in each month and the club extends an invitation to anyone interested. As its name indicates, this club is an offshoot of the Workers' Educational Association.

THE NEW SOUTH WALES FEDERATION OF BUSH WALKING CLUBS

Governed by a Council comprising delegates from each affiliated club and having the assistance of the following standing committees:

The Conservation Bureau.
The Information Bureau.
The Search and Rescue Section.
The Publications Committee.

Affiliated Clubs:

The Blaxland Bush-walkers' Club.
The Bush Club.
The Campfire Club.
The Coast and Mountain Walkers of N.S.W.
The Mountain Trails Club of N.S.W.
The River Canoe Club of N.S.W.
The Rover Ramblers' Club.
The Rucksack Club (Sydney, N.S.W.).
The S.T.C. Bushwalkers' Club.
The Sydney Bush Walkers.
The Trampers' Club of N.S.W.
The Warrigal Club of N.S.W.
The W.E.A. Ramblers.
The Y.M.C.A. Ramblers' Club.
The Y.W.C.A. Walking Club.

Information regarding any of the above Clubs or Committees may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary of the Federation:
Miss M. B. Byles, 4 Castlereagh Street, Sydney.

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The Committee also gratefully acknowledges the gift from Mr. Theo. B. Atkinson of Furniture Auctions Ltd. of a page to be used to advertise "anything of special interest decided upon by the Committee." This has enabled the outside back cover to be used to emphasize the need to PREVENT BUSHFIRES and so Save the Trees.

The cover pictures were provided by Mr. Reg. Alder, the map of Murrell's Track by Mr. Col. Smith. The Publications Committee is grateful to the New Zealand Government for its permission to use this map.

We are again deeply in debt to "Paddy" Pallin for much help in many ways.

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