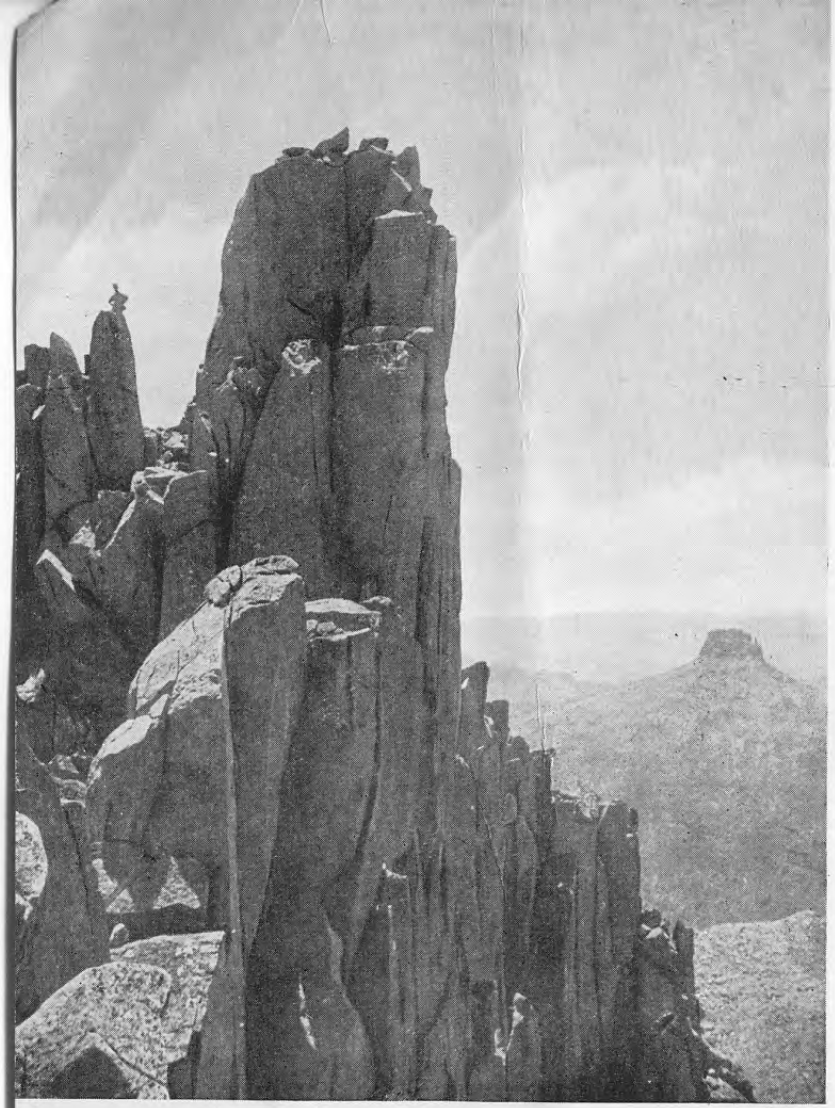
The Bushwalker 1946

No. 9 ★ 1/6



Mt. Ossa — George Gibley

The Challenge of the Mountains

The Bushwalker

No. 9 — *1946*

Contents

Published annually by the N.S.W. Federation of Bushwalking Clubs

The Federation which has seventeen affiliated member clubs has two main objects:

To unite people interested in bushwalking and similar outdoor activities—canoeing, ski-ing, climbing.

To conserve the bushlands.

A list of clubs will be found on the inside back cover and complete details of any club will be supplied on request by the Honorary Secretary of the Federation.

J. P. BLOM
President

Miss Marie Byles,
4 Castlereagh Street,
SYDNEY.
Hon. Secretary.

There's a good time coming

Wartime necessity has prompted intensive research into many of the walkers' perennial problems. Fighting men have had to cope with the difficulties which constantly face the pedestrian camper. Lightness, compactness, protection from wet and cold and heat and pests, preservation of food. All these problems have been tackled as never before and many new answers have been found. Synthetic materials have been devised to ensure protection from wet and damp. New processes of dehydration of foods have been discovered and new light alloys perfected.

Paddy is watching these things, following up new developments, and in due course will use them for the benefit of the walking fraternity. Yes. There's a good time coming.

But it is not here yet

Supplies of many materials are still difficult and labour is scarce. Month by month, however, things are improving, and you can be sure that as soon as new materials and new ideas are available Paddy will have them for the walker.

David Stead

"Can I See a Hut Over There?"

E. KAY

Shod in our formidable boots and self-contained with our rucksacks on our backs, we Bushwalkers look defiant of the weather. But not always do we scorn the shelter provided by civilisation. Of course our tents are products of civilisation and our camp's a very ingenious adaption of it but at times, even on a walk, we are glad to abandon our tents. In defence, I shall say that often this state of mind is due to our not being able to shake the dust or mud of the town from our feet at a proper and convenient time: we are caught at the hour of metamorphosis like a butterfly emerging from a chrysalis during a rainstorm. Lao Tze has said, "Whosoever adapteth himself shall be preserved to the end", and Bushwalkers often prefer to adapt themselves and so improve their chances of longevity.

In Walking, the most unpleasant situation I can recall (at the moment) is arriving at an unknown town, late at night, in the middle of a downpour, to commence a trip. If there is any living soul who, in such circumstances, does not hope for a hut, a deserted house, a railway station or anything whatever with a roof. . . . . but there is no need to speculate, no such person exists. The only consideration is privacy and even this becomes less important as the situation becomes more desperate.

It is only our regard for convention and the hardness of the bed which prevents us at times from sleeping on the footpath under a verandah, for necessity causes some very queer changes in people. Your elderly aunt, for example, would be horrified if asked to sleep in the local park where, under a border of salvias or in a grove of oleanders, she could have complete quiet and privacy. But take her by train interstate and suppose, in case she is financially bloated, that there are no sleeping berths available. In the company of complete strangers she and they presently

M. McGregor

Blue Gum Forest—Grose River

This natural park was preserved for the nation by the efforts of bushwalkers.

kick off their shoes, wiggle into grotesque attitudes, snore in six different keys and on as many themes. In the unconsciousness of sleep, your elderly aunt may even rest her head on the shoulder of the man next her. (How disillusioned must be the ticket-inspector who comes through the train in the middle of the night!) "But that's different", they say.

I have slept on the footpath. To make the offence more heinous it happened in front of a butcher's shop, which strikes me as being only half respectable. My motive was surely commendable. We, unheralded, wanted to pick up a lorry, the driver of which called at this particular shop at 3.30 a.m. To make sure of him—failure being ruination of a long weekend—and to get what sleep we could, we decided to sleep across the doorway. The plan was effective but a number of unforseen factors obtruded themselves. At 11.30 p.m. the country town was deserted but we were only just in our sleeping bags, feeling safe and unnoticed, when a dance finished in another part of the town and the dancers began to troop home. The remarks and speculations of those who saw us were most amusing, but the boldest and most curious were some Americans who came close until they saw the slouch hat of my friend when, with a "Ugh, Aussies," they fled. At some ridiculous hour the butcher himself arrived and had to be satisfied with a mumbled explanation for I was too tired and sleepy to care, and when the lorry arrived punctually at 3.30 a.m. I wished that the butchers inside the shop, chopping away and chatting brightly, had me on the block.

I am often struck by one's helplessness during the hours of sleep which are usually at least six per day. Think of us in the incident just described. Naturally we had misgivings about the affair but that did not affect my ability to sleep for I have, fortunately, the power to dispel anxieties by thinking, "There's nothing I can do so I may as well sleep." However, the butcher could have been a choleric man and have, without questioning, cut off our heads with a meat-axe. We lie asleep in the bush and around us are dozens of spiders and big, bitey ants, snakes, the whole tribe of crawley things, trees which may fall across our bodies and, over our heads, a tent which may collapse in a storm; nevertheless, we slip off into peaceful sleep. And who can claim to have awakened to find in his arms a snake, even a non-venomous one? And who has not, after only a few minutes acquaintance with people, accepted their offer of a roof?

I arrived at nightfall on a cold, wild night at the house of the border-gate keeper. Above us the pines on Mt. Clunie strained darkly. Camping out would have been most unpleasant but the hospitality of the keeper was such that I was given no option. After dinner we talked and I was shown such bric-a-brac as the enormous gallstones taken from the abdomen of this twenty stone giant and the eight scars of the incisions needed for their removal. When bedtime approached I was informed by his wife that I was to occupy the best bed and room. With shame, I protested. I showed my dirty and dishevelled self but in vain. I made excuses in ever increasing hyperbole until I was almost ready to swear that I had never slept between sheets before.

"The best bedroom," I was firmly told, "is kept for guests."

So I meekly followed my hostess through the house to the well-furnished room with double bed, snowy linen and eiderdown. And, crowning comfort and crowning shame, between the sheets reposed a filled hotwater bottle! During the night I could feel the house being lifted by the wind which was one of the most violent of my experience. It was the conventional atmosphere for a murder and a stab from a knife with twenty stone behind it would have impaled me to the flooring boards. But next morning, having shovelled the gallstones and other odds and ends off the table, my host gave me bacon and eggs and before I left insisted upon

substituting new-laid eggs for the town eggs I was carrying lest mine should be bad.

Sometimes, annoying necessity forces you to sleep right in a town to catch an early train, for example. A town of such proportions that you cannot camp on the outskirts and then skip along and catch the train in a few minutes generally boasts a showground. That is your safest bet. However, you would never do this sort of thing but for necessity, for the surroundings are usually sordid and your bed hard earth or boards. Usually, too, you have to creep around stealthily so as not to arouse the suspicions of the local constabulary. On one occasion I arose quite high culturally and in elevation by sleeping in a bandstand. Nevertheless it was such a dilapidated, dejected building that I felt quite uninspired.

Sometimes fate is more kind. On the night that the drunken "Yank" picked me up and offered to take me to Laidley in a heavy army truck, we crashed along at terrifying speed. He consoled me by saying that he had not driven for a long time and by informing me that the trucks passing us were laden with ammunition. By the time we had lost ourselves he had sobered and his enthusiasm had markedly waned but he was still reluctant to drop me in the open countryside which appeared, to him, so inhospitable. At length, at about 1 a.m. I spied a solitary church which provided a convenient excuse. I relaxed in the porch and it is not surprising that my thoughts wandered to the subject of the sanctuary of the church for lawbreakers. In the morning I peeped out, wondering where I might be. It was a colourful landscape softened by a benevolent haze and over it there seemed to rest a best-dress, complacent feeling and a Sabbath calm. However it was only Saturday so, having thought gratefully of the porch and wondered as to the denomination, I breakfasted and set off to ask the first person I met the name of the locality.

Yes, we must confess that at times we are most anxious to see over us a roof more substantial than our flimsy japara! Or we sleep out without erecting a tent but with the comfortable feeling that not far away is a deserted house to which we can retreat in an emergency. Or we walk miles over rain-sodden country peering through more rain for a likely shelter. . . . hoping to hear the cheering words, with a tinge of doubt in case of disappointment, "Can I see a hut over there?"

Tents

We pitched our tent beneath the tree
As trim and taut as tent could be;
And soon about us in the glade
There twinkled tents in every shade
Of fawn and green, best Paddy-Made.
And "Faith!" we thought complacently,
"Who could have finer tents than we?"

But in the grass from blade to blade
Skilful Arachne plied her trade,
And with unerring artistry
Wove for herself a canopy
(Pure gossamer, of finest grade)
So excellent that we, dismayed
Looked up, pretending not to see
—But there again our pride was [illegible]ed,
For lo, above us, blue and high,
Towered the pavilion of the sky.

—K.M.

Where the Trees Slope Down to the Sea

Bateman's Bay State Forests

MARIE B. BYLES

We left the South Coast road and passed through avenues of tall, straight spotted gums, soon sloping down from the high Murramarang Range and giving us glimpses, through the silver-blue aisles, of a sandy cove and a turquoise sea beyond.

At Pebbly Beach, where we camped on the first visit, there is a narrow strip of grass with a few ancient huts but mostly the trees come right to the edge of the yellow sand, the grey, shingle beaches or the rocky headlands.

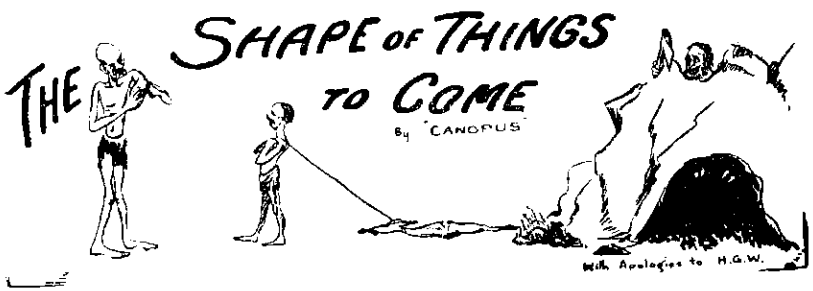
It was 20 years since the huts at Pebbly Beach had been inhabited by saw-millers, 20 years since the trees had been allowed to regenerate free from fires, and in only that short time they had attained a beauty such as we never see around Sydney and the Blue Mountains where every few years they are devastated by bush fires.

Though I had been walking in N.S.W. for over 30 years, it now, for the first time, began to dawn on my dull intelligence, that bushwalkers seldom see a gum tree that has grown naturally. With the exception of a few in the very depths of canyoned valleys, they are all maimed and generally contorted and dwarfed by the bush fires that have ravaged them. Sydney peppermints are distinguished, around Sydney, by their black butts, scraggly branches, wealth of dead wood and general deformity, but at Bateman's Bay they have pale brown bark and grow as tall and straight as telegraph poles. Yet nothing has been done to make them thus except leave Nature to do her own work free from fires. And so with the other trees there, especially the dominant blue-white spotted gum.

Keeping out fires is not, however, an easy business. All the forest area has to be kept under view from look-out stations which are connected by telephone with each other and with the local control office. The position of the fire is located by cross-bearings as soon as it is reported and at once two trucks and twelve trained men are rushed out with rakes, water and knapsack pumps. There are forest roads not more than half a mile or so apart, so that all this equipment can be brought within a quarter of a mile of any fire. The area of 40 miles by 15 miles is staffed with two officers, seven foremen and about nine other men having other work besides fire-control but available for full-time duty on this when the need arises.

Bush fires around Sydney and in the Blue Mountains are often caused by the carelessness of picnickers and young boys. But at Bateman's Bay the recreationalists have been very willing to co-operate with the foresters. It is the stockmen who are the trouble, for they deliberately set the bush on fire—to produce grass for their cattle, or so they reason, though of course in the long run, the destruction of humus spoils grass as well as trees. These stockmen penetrate everywhere; from look-outs we saw fires in places marked white on the map.

Bush fires not only ruin the trees from a timber point of view; they also make anything like a primitive area impossible by causing some abnormal growth. At Bateman's Bay it is the hickory, a kind of wattle, which, after a fire has gone through, forms a dense jungle that prevents anything else growing. If fires are kept out, eventually the hickory dies down and takes its proper place as merely one tree among many other varieties. The forest then becomes fairly open with macrozamia, or burrawong providing a pleasing deep-green contrast with the silver-white of the spotted gum, the torquoise sea and the sparkling waves—perfect walking country.



Scene: The Mulgoa soak in the year 2945.

"Father," said young Noogoora, as he paused in his work of sharpening a steel spear point on a sandstone slab, "Why were the Blue Mountains called 'Blue' when they are really brown?"

"Because when the savages first came here, in the horse age, they were covered with trees and looked blue in the distance."

"But what happened to the trees?"

"They were killed by fire, drought and sand."

"But why did that happen after the savages came? Didn't they want the trees?"

"That, my boy is a long story, but I will tell it as well as I can. To begin, perhaps I had better explain that the savages were a very ignorant people. They didn't understand the country as we do. Over many generations our people had learnt to live on its plants and animals without destroying them. We knew that nature's balance was very delicate, that only by very special adaption to drought and heat had its wild life managed to survive. That was why we named groups in our tribes after different animals and charged these groups with the duty of preserving them. Our people on the desert margins knew that once the natural cover was destroyed it would never come back, so they never disturbed the soil.

"But the savages came from a land where there were no droughts or great heat, and where strong growing grasses soon covered the land again when they had laid it bare. They thought that when they had killed the trees by burning and chopping them the land would become like their own. For a while the grass did grow thicker and nourished fat tender animals, which were their principal food. Sometimes they destroyed the grasses too and planted others with large and numerous seeds, which were another of their favourite foods. A lot of the animals or their wool and much of the seed was sent to other countries instead of replenishing the soil from which it came.

"The smaller animals, called sheep, chewed the tender grasses very short. Smaller animals still, which they called vermin, ate the grass right down to the roots. Gradually, most of the grass too was killed as the animals destroyed it in droughts. Then the soil became parched and bare. The animals pounded it into dust which blew away in the wind or was washed away when the drought broke. The weather became hotter and drier."

"But, Daddy," interrupted Noogoora, "couldn't they see this happening?"

"Yes, some did, but most didn't want to. There were plenty of signs that the country and climate were changing—heat and drought greater than any they had experienced before, months when the sun seldom shone through the dust and smoke, darkness in the middle of the day, the fish choked and starved in the muddy waters, streams filling with gravel and silt, sand dunes where there had been pasture."

"And why didn't they stop it?"

"That, my son, is another story. At first those who destroyed the most trees and owned the most animals were made chiefs. In the oil age some of those who could see what was happening tried to stop it but they were told it wouldn't pay."

"What does 'pay' mean, Dad?"

"It was a word peculiar to those times. We have never found any definition of it, but we think it means that there would have been less left over for the chiefs to eat. Not all the chiefs, of course, lived on the land. Some of them are said to have lived beyond the Wadi Parramatta and worshipped in the granite temples.

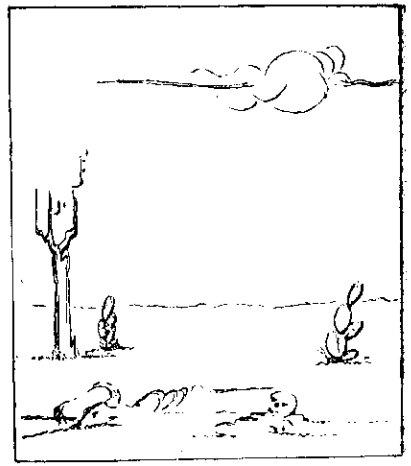
"However, to go on with the story—near the end of the oil age the savages did try to stop it. At first they thought the trouble was that there was not enough water. So they tried to make lakes by building walls across valleys. In a few years the lakes filled up with gravel and silt. There are still some marshes like those at Burrinjuck and Warragamba, where the walls were heavy enough to resist the pressure of silt behind them. In the atomic age they blasted whole mountains into river valleys and some of the lakes formed were not filled up for many years. They had great machines which tore trenches and banked the land so as to stop the wind and rain from washing away the soil. They planted a lot of trees and grasses, but none would grow like the original ones because they couldn't stand the heat and drought."

"Why didn't they plant the old ones?"

"They did try it but they wouldn't grow either because the soil they were used to and the ground plants which held the soil had gone. Usually it was too dry even for the native plants. Nothing they could do would put moisture in the air, cool it, and make rain. Not that it didn't rain sometimes. It rained then much as now, seldom but in torrents.

"And what did they do then, Daddy?"

"Those who survived the coal, oil, atom and cosmic wars—mostly old people living on farms—struggled for some time to keep their machines going. By this time great areas of land were needed to feed very few animals or grow many seeds. They couldn't keep the machines that moved on tracks going nor keep the tracks themselves from breaking up because the tracks were so long and the people so few. As the other machines depended on the tracks, they soon broke down too. Some used machines that travelled in the air for a time till something called 'credit', that came from other lands gave out. As the people became fewer they were too scatterd for the young to be taught in groups, so they lost the art of writing (which our tribes had learnt by then) and we don't know what happened to the last of them. It was a long time after they disappeared that our people crossed the great desert between the Central Mountains and the Dividing Range and hunted on the ancient grounds of the coastal tribes."



"How beautiful those mountains must have been when they were covered with trees," reflected Noogoora.

"Yes, our legends say they were like a garden with many kinds of delicate and colourful flowers. Even the trees were often covered in flowers. In the folk lore of the savages there was a myth that they too had been expelled from a garden, somewhere in Iran. They said their God expelled them, but we know now that He didn't. They destroyed it themselves."

Our Case for Conservation

A. G. COLLEY

Until recent years only a few people had any interest in bushland conservation. A good proportion of these were walkers, others were nature lovers or scientists, and some, fortunately, were in Government departments. The achievements of these few in the face of public apathy were notable. They succeeded in having reserved several areas of our most beautiful bushland—including Bluegum, Garrawarra, Bouddi and part of the Southern Blue Mountains.

Beyond persuading the Government to classify areas as reserves there has been little the bushwalking movement could do in conserving them. We could not stop vandalism, flower gathering or timber destruction. Worse still we could do nothing about bush fires, except set a good example which few saw and fewer followed. Reservation may even have increased fires, since nobody has any interests in putting out fires where there are no property interests. National Park and Kuring-Gai are outstanding examples of this. Big fires are an annual event in National Park where no attempt is made to control them until "property"—which means buildings—are threatened. The Kuring-Gai Trust does its best with quite inadequate means to control fires. In most other reserves nothing is done to control them.

Our present efforts to prevent fires may have some moral value, but cannot have any practical effect. On any week-end in our reserves near the city there are scores of incipient fires in the form of lighted cigarettes and lunch fires, while in backyards and farmlets round the borders of the reserves are numerous rubbish fires. Then there are the fires started by those who profit from them—such as the wild-flower gatherer in the near city areas and the scrub-cattle "grazier" in the outer areas. Our propaganda will never convert more than a few of the careless. It won't persuade those who burn for profit. The spread of some of the sources of fire is inevitable whenever temperature is high and humidity low. Nothing less than a full control service with regular fire-watchers, firefighters and equipment will be effective. Such an organisation is a far cry from anything that has yet been done on our reserves. The public are so used to the scrubby growth and mangled, twisted trees which now pass for bushland that they do not realise that it could ever be different. Even amongst bushwalkers few seem to realise that primitive areas are not created by proclamation alone, but require to be supervised and preserved. If even a small area could be set aside and subjected to proper supervision and fire control it would be an object lesson. It would teach that the bush is "silent and monotonous" only because its life has been destroyed by fire. In time, the area would be covered with tall straight trees, coloured with wild flowers, animated by wild life. Many might be converted to an active interest in bushland conservation.

Interest in conservation in the wider sense i.e. conservation of all natural resources—has been forced upon public attention by the events of recent years. Unprecedented drought, bushfires which cost many lives and destroyed farm property and forests worth millions, soil erosion on previously fertile land, water shortages and food shortages, have pointed a moral. In N.S.W. we now have a Minister for Conservation and a Soil Erosion Commission. The emphasis is shifting from exploitation to conservation as it is realised that our land resources are deteriorating in productivity. Progress, it is coming to be realised, depends upon the scientific use and replacement of our natural resources, not upon the rapidity with which we can

wrest them from the soil and sell them.

Up till now the conservation arguments we could use effectively were limited. We could advocate the reservation of an area because it was a good scenic area, because many people would visit it, because it was a pity to destroy the bush, and—usually—because it wouldn't cost anything. If we succeeded in having some small areas of no "productive" value classified as reserves we had done well. Suggestions for large reservations usually had little effect. Fires were considered deplorable, but didn't do any harm "in the bush." Erosion was usually unnoticed. But with the awakening of public interest together with the establishment of official conservation authorities, we now have some strong allies if we choose.

Perhaps the strongest of these is—or could be if we wished it — the Forestry Commission. The need for timber is obvious. It is used, amongst other purposes, for all types of building construction. It is a product of bushland and at the present rate of consumption and destruction, our forests won't last many years longer. If the Forestry Commission is given the means, large areas which have been cut out, rung or burned, will be converted to good forest lands. Anyone who has seen the State Forest at Bateman's Bay—and State forests are about the only areas in the State that are not burnt out periodically—cannot doubt what a boon forestry areas with fire control would be. The Commission stresses the recreational value of its forests and the need for primitive areas. Any areas that it preserves from indiscriminate cutting and frequent fires are a net gain in the cause of bushland conservation. The great expense of reafforesting these areas would never be undertaken for any other reason than that of obtaining timber.

Then there are what might be termed the "water interests," which include, in greater or lesser degree, almost everybody. Water is the "sine qua non" of rural and city development. To preserve our water supplies we must conserve the catchment areas. If they are denuded the flow of streams is irregular, water is polluted and dams fill with silt. It is no accident that most of the areas we want conserved are ideal catchment areas.

They are ideal because they are mountainous, timbered, and have little pastoral or agricultural value.

Another national interest which is gradually being recognised is that of human conservation, or national fitness. It is coming to be realised that one of the best ways to keep city youth fit is to encourage them to walk and camp. Areas near cities are needed for this purpose.

Lastly there are the tourist interests. Tourists, if any, will come from crowded industrial countries. They will not come to see buildings, bridges or national works and monuments, which are bigger and better at home. If they come, it will be to see the countryside—our Australian landscape and our unique flora and fauna. It must be admitted that with our bushlands in their present state, we haven't much to show them at the end of their 8-12,000 mile trip.

Conservation is of national significance and deserves the support of all patriotic people. In the past our case has been limited to saying, in effect, "We want this place classified as a reserve because it's nice to look at and walk about in and it's no good for anything else anyway." Now we can say "It is in the national interest to conserve this area, not only because of its scenic beauty, but because it will yield timber or water, will help youth to keep fit, or will attract tourists," and expect our case to attract attention. By paddling our canoe in the strong currents we shall get there much sooner.

Meet Some of the Oldest Inhabitants

DOROTHY LAWRY

There have been Burrawang Palms (Macrozamia) in Australia for a million years or more. There are still hundreds of them on the hills of Bouddi Natural Park. Their seeds are poisonous but, thousands of years ago, the aborigines found a way to get rid of the poison and make a flour from the burrawang seeds.

Less than two hundred years ago the white man came to live in Australia, but already he has ousted the black man and has gone far towards wiping out the native animals and plants, not only by his spreading cultivation, but by the deadly and ever more frequently recurring bushfires. Year after year devastating bushfires have swept through the sandstone country of the Blue Mountains and around Sydney, leaving blackened stumps and bare ground. True, year after year those stumps have sprouted with festoons of green leaves; green shoots have appeared through the ashes on the ground—but have you noticed the various wildflowers that have disappeared as a result of those fires?

Some plants, of course, are harder to destroy than others. Have you noticed what a thick crop of young grass trees (Xanthorrhoea) will often appear after a bushfire? It is probably not an entirely new crop, but looks like one because the other vegetation is missing, at least temporarily. Mr. Jacobs of the W.E.A. Ramblers once told me that the reason xanthorrhoea withstands bushfires better than most plants is that its growing point is not at the tip of the leaves, as in most plants, but at the base of the leaf. Thus, if a leaf is only scorched, it will not die and have to be replaced, it will keep on growing from the base. This is one reason why the grass-tree has persisted through so many tens of thousands of years.

Bushfires not only destroy the rooted plants and the comparatively slow-moving animals, they destroy the birds and many insects, too, either directly as they burn, or indirectly by drying up the pools and destroying the food. With the birds and insects gone, many of the new seedlings that may spring up later will have no chance of producing seeds, even if they are not killed by another bushfire before they are big enough to flower. They need the birds, or the bees, or other insects for the pollination of their flowers.

Of course you know that the Flannel Flower (Actinotus Helianthi) usually grows in dry, rocky or sandy positions, but did you know that the flannel effect comes from a dense covering of branched hairs filled with air, which is specially designed to equalise the temperature? What a fitting badge for bushwalkers in eider-down sleeping bags!

We all know the banksias, but did you know that the aborigines used to make a drink by soaking the flower spikes in water? Or that the seedpods remain unopened on the tree for a number of years, to release the winged seeds when a particularly hot, dry season comes along? Did you know that very many of our native plants produce extra flowers and extra seeds whenever conditions are particularly hard? Apparently they sense that there is extra danger of their dying in a drought year, so they provide an unusually large number of seeds as an added precaution against the species dying out. But to cope with the bushfires started by the white man is more than many of them can manage. These oldest inhabitants of Australia need more and more friends amongst the white men, to reduce the number and frequency of the fires.

We have reached a time of choice. Will we have BUSHFIRES or BUSH?

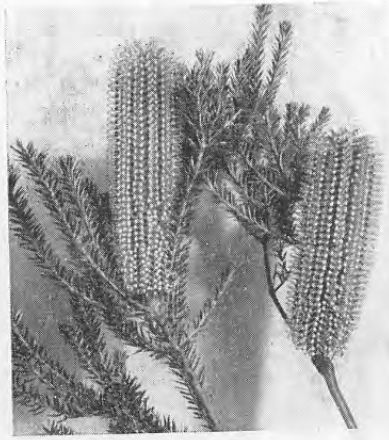
"He that has eyes to see . . ."

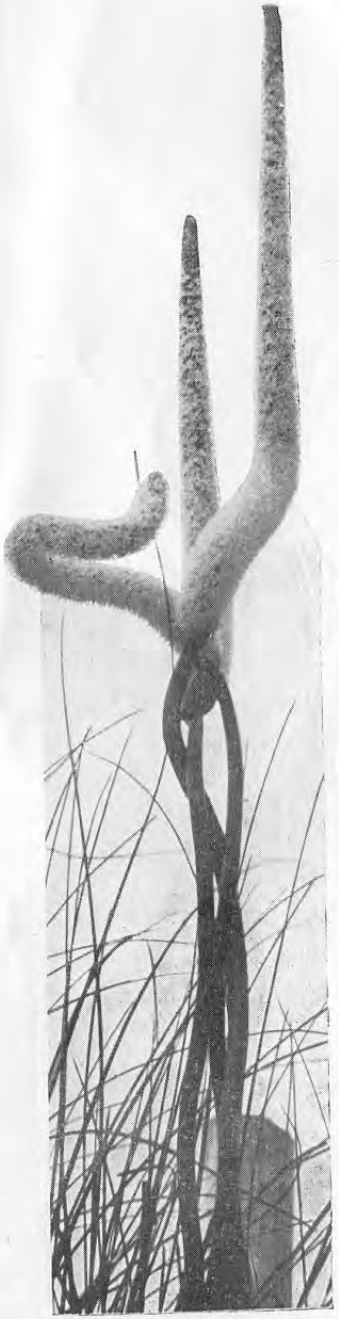
Flannel Flower (Actinotus Helianthi)
photograph by Malcolm McGregor

Grass Tree (Xanthorhoea)

Banksia (Banksia Ericifolia)
photographs by David Stead

Blocks donated by Caloola Club





Changeful Kanangra — Hub of Many Walks

"Noonday" — by Arthur Gilroy

"Misty Morning" Brian Harvey

Frenchman's Cap — January, 1946

JOHN HUNTER

The Hobart - Queenstown Bus toiled up to the crest of the ridge and suddenly an amazing skyline, jagged and improbable, came into view. This effect was given by a bare, white, gleaming quartzite range in vivid contrast to those of dark dolorite through which we had been passing. In the centre, proudly stood Frenchman's Cap, an enormous block of quartzite reaching up to 4736 feet and crowned with long snowdrifts which sparkled in the midday sun.

The bus stopped just west of the 33rd milestone from Queenstown, near Stonehaven Creek. Now the improbable happened for presently two people alighted from the Launceston bus bound for the same goal as I. So Godfrey and Ann Smith and I together took the old track to the Jane River diggings, the track which we intended following for seven miles to the Frenchman turnoff. The Franklin (named after the Polar explorer and ex-Governor of Tasmania) was soon crossed by means of a rotting wooden bridge; then a stiff climb out of the valley brought us to another view of our goal, now however, partly obscured by threatening clouds.

No sooner had we crossed one river than we found it necessary to negotiate the Loddon River and its many branches by means of precarious log bridges. The waters of the rivers in this district are a brown-black colour which is due to the vegetable matter. The river branches are fringed with a tangled mixture of bauera scrub, manuka and ferns so we were not sorry to take the track across the button grass plains, although careful stepping is required to avoid pockets of black mud, some thigh-deep, between the clumps of grass.

A noticeboard erected by the Hobart Walking Club in the middle of a button grass plain indicates the track to Frenchman's. First camp was pitched in a small patch of gum forest nearby.

The next day dawned threateningly and low-lying clouds pressed down on the hills. It seemed as though the West Coast intended living up to its reputation for bad weather. Our party was increased here by the addition of Charlie Bachelor from Hobart who was attempting the Cap for the third time, bad weather having beaten him previously.

After passing through a dense patch of myrtle forest we came to Lake Vera, set in a steep, walled valley below Barron Pass. The sides of Lake Vera are very heavily bushed with pandani and pines. Our first meeting was made here with horizontal scrub, a growth peculiar to Tasmania and much detested by the early (and modern) prospectors on account of the impenetrable tangle formed by its logs and branches. Over everything grew a green jacket of lichens and mosses. Fortunately there is a clear space at the head of the lake and here we boiled the billy with fragrant billets of huon pine chopped with a scrub knife.

After lunch we started the 2,500 feet climb up to Barron Pass by following a creek bed. Here the forest was even more lush and green, sassafras and pine competing with ferns for space. At rare, clear spots in the track the yellow and red Blandfordia bloomed, providing a contrast against the sea of green.

Now the weather broke with a vengeance and we sidled along the side of the range through icy rain whipped along by a high wind. Being too cold to stop, we first passed a sodden valley filled with pineapple grass and then climbed around a pine covered ridge to arrive at the dark waters of Lake Tahune. At the overflow of this lake we pitched our tents, building up a platform of dead pandanus leaves to keep out the mud.

The drizzle continued all night and we looked out unhappily in the morning on a dense bank of cloud which obscured everything of interest. However, after a leisurely breakfast, we judged the clouds to be lifting and, as there was no rain, decided to attempt the final ascent. A climb of half an hour over tumbled schist brought us up on the North Col which joins the Frenchman to the main range and overlooks another shapely lake formed by glacial action, Lake Gwendolin. Soon we were looking for a way up the cliffs overhead. A steep chimney with a considerable overhang gave us some breathless moments but with the aid of a length of rope we were soon up and threading a way through mosses and dead creeping-pines on a wide, inclined ledge. Everywhere gentians were blooming, not the familiar blue but of a creamy white. The only movement was the scattering of grasshoppers as we approached.

After carefully passing a longer chimney we were among the snowdrifts. The clouds were still lifting and our hopes for a view from the top rose. The last few hundred feet consisted of only rising bare rock. We greeted the cairn with what breath we had left and then paused, enthralled by the splendid view revealed as the curtain of cloud rolled back.

Apart from the breathtakingly sheer cliff face to the South-East estimated at 2,400 feet high, the Cap seems to be buttressed on all sides by bare, white ridges which vie with one another in jaggedness and bizarre effects. In glacier-torn pockets lie jewel-like mountain tarns. Eight considerable lakes near at hand can be seen from the summit.

Much of the charm of Frenchman's Cap lies in the fact that it is set in wild, unsettled country. For 80 miles in any direction not a farm or sign or cultivation is visible. Instead, there is peak after peak and rugged ranges stretch away to the sea or to the limit of sight. To the North are the dark peaks of the Reserve, Barn Bluff, Cradle Mountain and the Eldon Range; towards the West Coast is Mt. Murchison and the bare slopes of the mountains around Queenstown; towards the South and South-East there are peaks and ridges without number.

Reasoning that some wallabies had ascended by an easier route than we, we scouted around and found a blazed track back to the Col. Soon we were lunching by Lake Tahune, now placid in the sunlight and reflecting a thousand feet of dark forest capped by hundreds of feet of white quartzite.

The Re-Union

The most typical social event in the Federation's calendar is the annual Reunion. For the benefit of the uninitiated, it may be necessary to explain that a Reunion is a weekend camp of walkers generally at some spot easy of access so that older walkers may attend and those with youngsters need not be deterred.

The Nepean River was the rendezvous this year and the weather could not have been more kindly. The camp fire was one of the best both in point of entertainment and in the advantage taken of the topography of the site—a miniature Hollywood Bowl with stars of all kinds! The use of two fires for the lighting was a feature which might well be copied on all important occasions.

On Sunday there was a sports programme, swimming, entertainment by the canoeists and of course the round of social visits. As there is very little walking to be done, a Reunion sounds like a rest-cure but one has to be very strong-minded to make it so.

December in the Grampians

DOT ENGLISH

The Great Dividing Range runs south in an unbroken chain from North Queensland, through N.S.W., then turns westward and finally peters out in the flat Wimmera country of Victoria. The Grampians, covering an area of about 50 miles by 20 miles, dangle on the end of this 3,000 mile chain—a beautiful little embossed ornament on the bosom of the Western plains. They are rather difficult of access to the Sydney walker, but from Melbourne one does the trip in less than a day.

Although the northern end of the area is most boosted to the tourist, we found the south most appealing to the Bushwalker who likes his areas primitive and "unimproved." We went as far south as the service car goes, to a large guest house—Hotel Belfield—lying in the valley below Belfield Peak, then walked a further couple of miles south and camped by a pleasant little trout stream.

Geologically speaking the Grampians are of block fault formation. They run at right angles across the end of the Great Divide in three roughly parallel ranges stretching north and south, the rocky western slopes running up in a gentle incline to drop sharply and precipitously down the eastern face. Mt. William, just under 4,000 ft., is the highest peak on the Grampians and was to be the goal of our next day's walking. The only map available was a somewhat inaccurate tourist road map. It shows a nice thick dotted line of a track leading from the roadway to the summit of Mt. William—a mere 5 miles—and as this was our first day's experience with the map nothing warned us to be distrustful. So about 11 o'clock we broke camp and pottered along to the weir on Fyan's Creek. Here we had an early lunch and hid our packs, then set off with 8 or more hours of daylight in which to do what we estimated to be a 4 hours' walk. But we searched in vain for the track—nothing but thick scrub, and very prickly too. So we plunged through the undergrowth hoping to soon cut the track before long. But we didn't cut the track, and the undergrowth didn't improve either in quantity or quality. Persistent struggling eventually brought us out to the high country we were aiming for, but many hours had been lost. Away to the east towards Ararat stretched the level plain. Behind us was the spectacular Red Bluff, and in front rose Mt. William looking hardly more than an hour's walk away. But hour after hour slipped away and it was 5 o'clock when the base of the summit rocks was reached. Should we spend another hour gaining the summit, with the certainty of spending the night out with only a box of matches to keep us warm, or should we try to get back to our packs by dark? The latter suggestion won.

Knowing that any creek in that vicinity was a tributary of Fyan's Creek we got into the nearest and followed it down. The descent became steeper and steeper but at least the creek bed was free from undergrowth. When we got into Fyan's Creek daylight was rapidly fading. Both banks were steep and densely overgrown offering not even a campsite for a rabbit let alone a space to light a fire. The water got deeper as we proceeded, blockups of fallen timber increased, and by the time it was almost too dark to see where to put our feet and we had both slipped in and got wet to the waist, providence gave us a break in the form of a wide log bridge over the creek which naturally suggested a road leading to and from. We found it with difficulty in the dark and sped along in an effort to warm up.

Gaining the road, however, was not the end of the story, we still had to find our packs. Imagine a pitch black night; imagine yourself

on an unknown road not certain whether to follow it north or south, and numerous small tracks, any one of which might or might not lead to the weir, leading off it. We had just about resigned ourselves to spending the rest of the evening vainly probing down such tracks by matchlight when we did find the one which lead to the weir. Thankfully we retrieved our packs and put on dry clothes and within a quarter of an hour were back at our previous night's campsite and our troubles were over.

We awoke late next morning. Ira found that 60% of his toenails had been wrecked and it took us a good hour to remove the thorns and splinters from our anatomy. We called this a day of rest, merely prospecting the beginnings of a track up the opposite range. It was a promising beginning so next morning we departed with two small packets of lunch for a day trip up Mt. Lubra. The track vanished on the first ridge in a welter of post-bushfire wattles, bracken and similar rubbish, through which we twigged a path right to the summit which we found invaluable for the return journey. Lubra is really delightful. The view out over Victoria Valley is wide and wild and all around the long precipices of rocky ranges surge like breakers in a high sea. The scrub, too, is bluish green, and from above looks like the rippled surface of an ocean swell. The effect is quite unlike any other mountains I have seen. It was a perfect day. We traversed three minor peaks and returned to camp about dark.

Next day we left the South and followed the road north, the whole bush colourful with wildflowers, the trees weighed down with bright parrots, and in between slender wattle stems flitted innumerable small birds. We met quite a few huge stumpy-tailed blue-tongue lizards, and a couple of echidnas; wallabies bounded through the bush and the weird drumming of emus indicated their presence in large numbers although I missed seeing any.

We climbed Mt. Victory through fields of wildflowers. After several hours on its long summit we passed on, and when the smell of evening deepened on the air we found a little timber-getter's hut and camped there as a cold wind was blowing on the exposed heights.

Next day we walked to Wartook Reservoir down a long hard road, detouring to look at MacKenzie Falls and Broken Falls which lie in a very deep gorge and are quite spectacular. The caretaker at Wartook was so delighted to see visitors that he supplied us with a stretcher and kapok mattress which was just too too luxurious but very much appreciated, likewise a diminutive yabbie which I cooked for tea—we were running short of provisions. Hunger made me rash and I tried to get the last morsel of flesh from the little beastie by chewing up his shell too, but some nasty little piece of it worked its way down my throat and I spent the rest of the evening choking till our kindly caretaker came to my rescue with a whole loaf of bread which I was instructed to eat dry. Ira swore I choked myself on purpose to get the bread. It was good anyhow.

Next day we were given instructions for finding a track which was to lead us on to the range and save us hours of road walk, but after locating same and following it for several miles N.W. when our objective was practically S.E., we decided it must be another one of those zig-zag timber tracks and returned to the road. It probably did lead to the top of the range all

The hospitable little timber-getter's hut again opened its doorway to us—it had no doorway to open—and bright and early next morning we departed like Alice for Wonderland. This is the tourist showground where every nook and cranny and gap and precipice and lump of rock has its appropriate name. The guide can point out innumerable subtlties in rock such as The Rt. Hon. S. M. Bruce, whales and porpoises and many another queer fish, but your perception has to be as subtle

as your subject to recognise them. The Grand Canyon, which leads to all these marvels is short and spectacular and very easy walking, one section—the Boulevarde—so resembling a suburban footpath, that I'm sure it was manufactured several million years ago with the present-day tourist in mind. There is a wired-in lookout from which you may gaze into the valley, which we forthwith did and spotted out a good campsite for our last evening's camp. A gentle ramble down a well-worn track led us out to the Halls Gap camping ground—a well-catered-for tourist area where lorry loads of lads loitered and lassies lingered till the last gleam of daylight sent them speeding home.

And now, after 8 days of brilliant heat in a country of magnificent distances, the warm air permeated by a wild honey smell, the sky at night freekled with millions of stars, the Royal Revolver of this globe of ours brought Monday round all too soon and returned us to the murk of the City. Do I repeat myself when I say I don't like it?

The Bushwalkers' Services Committee

At the end of 1945, the above committee presented its fifth and final annual report after five years of activity. No one was sorry that the end of hostilities and demobilisation brought the need for the committee to an end but we all knew that the committee would willingly function as long as it was required.

The highest number of service members of Federated Clubs on the register of the Committee at one time was 172 and the regular fortnightly posting of "mental comforts" over the five years to these required the wrapping and posting of the following astonishing number of articles:

Club Magazines, "Annuals" and miscellaneous publications	9,908
Packets and parcels	979
Photographs	6,000
Letters	287
Xmas Cards	500
Songbooks	105
Circulars and reports	158

The amount of money handled in achieving these figures was £360 raised by the activities and support of the various clubs and by donations from individuals which, alone, totalled £30. Administrative expenses were kept down to the low figure of 3%.

In its concluding report the Committee said, "We should like to say how pleased we are that we have been able, on your behalf, to bring some measure of cheer to our friends whilst in the Forces, and that the many, many letters of appreciation we have received have more than compensated us for the work we have done." Further, the Committee expressed its thanks to all Federated Clubs for their support.

Our thanks, in great measure, are due to the Committee for its tireless, unstinted work. In particular, we mention Maurie Berry, Doreen Harris, "Dunk", Millie Horne, Bill Waite and "Paddy" Pallin and his staff but this does not by any means exhaust the list of people, such as those who made and did numerous printing jobs, who gave generously of their time the hundreds of photographic prints and efforts.

THE BUSHWALKER

"We will remember them"

Many Bushwalkers—both men and women—served with the Forces in the Second World War and most of them, fortunately, returned to us. Some, however, will never again walk the bush tracks. Not one of these rests on his native soil yet the love of each for his country was deep, intimate and abiding; deep but not ostentatious, intimate in a joy in tree and grass and sky, abiding in the very fibre.

The protection and preservation of the bushlands was the job which **Charles Roberts** adopted as his own particular contribution to the community and he threw all his energies and his genius for organisation into this work during the years he was associated with the Coast and Mountain Walkers and with the Federation as its Honorary Secretary.

He was of the adventurous type who loved to break into new country; he was a good comrade and a good bushman and he did what was in his power to ensure that others would be able to find in the bush the same happiness as he himself had found.

He resigned from the Honorary Secretaryship of the Federation to join the Army and gave his life in Malaya, and stories we have heard show that the same spirit of self-sacrifice and comradeship which we knew of old, still manifested itself during the time he was a Prisoner of War.

While still living in the country, **Arnold Ray** became a bushwalker with the C.M.W.'s and travelled many miles on his motor bike to join his city friends on their trips.

Arnold was a good mate, he was a tireless walker and loved the comradeship of the camp fire, and gave his friendship without stint. His walking was largely done in the Blue Mountains country, although later a change of work gave him the opportunity of knowing something of our Alpine Country.

He was filled with the zest of living and it was not easy to imagine, when he joined the R.A.A.F., that any harm could come to him. He went overseas and shortly after arriving in England he gave his life during operations against Germany.

Although deeply imbued with a love for the green fields of his English home, **Gordon Townend** soon succumbed to the charm of the brown and blue Australian landscape. His wide appreciation of Nature and his tolerant manner drew him into bushwalking as a member of the C.M.W.'s and for the short time allowed, he tramped in the Blue Mountains and National Park, finding in these rugged lands a complement to the rolling landscapes of home.

In July, 1942, he joined the R.A.A.F. hoping to be transferred to Britain. His desire to join in the defence of England was fulfilled. Two years later he was reported missing while on an operational flight over Germany.

The hand of war fell heavily on the youth of our country. **Bruce Elder** had been bushwalking for a short time only before he enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy. It was in 1938 that he joined the Coast and Mountain Walkers. His first trip was of a fortnight's duration in the Clyde River district, which turned a leaning towards Nature into a positive fondness for all that our bush country had to offer, a fondness mingled with an energy of spirit which only youth can possess.

"Shattered my glass, ere half the sands had run." What this early love for Nature would have produced we shall never know. He went down with his ship, H.M.A.S. "Sydney," in December, 1941.

Gordon Marshall Mannell was admitted to membership of the Sydney Bush Walkers in March, 1934. Those members who walked with him well remember his love of the bush, his friendliness, and at all times his consideration for others.

He was always eager to get away from the beaten track and visit areas not familiar to the majority of bushwalkers. He was a member of the first Sydney Bush Walker parties to climb Mount King George from Blue Gum Forest, descend Bonnum Pic, Wollondilly River, and cross the ranges from Moruya to follow the Deua River to Araluen. The Macleay River from Uralla, via Postman's Creek, was also a trip pioneered by him.

Although the father of two young children, Gordon felt it his duty to enlist, and he left Australia for England to serve as an Air Gunner in the R.A.A.F. He was posted missing after a bombing raid on Germany early in 1945.

It was sad news for the many bushwalkers who had known **Gordon Smith** to hear that he had died in a Japanese prison camp in Borneo during the last stages of the war.

Gordon started walking as a track walker in 1921, and had an outstanding athletic career. Before he enlisted he held nearly all the Australian long distance records.

As a result of long training walks, mainly on roads, he became interested in bush walking, and joined the Sydney Bushwalkers as a foundation member in 1928. In these early days of the Club, he pioneered, with fellow club members, a number of routes, some of which are now popular walks. They included the first traverse of the Gangerang, where his name has been given to the pass leading to the range from Kanangra; and the first trip down the Colo River. In later years he led a number of large parties over some of the roughest of the mountain country.

He enlisted in the A.I.F. early in 1940 and was taken prisoner in Malaya early in 1942. Little is known of his subsequent movements as most of his comrades perished in Borneo.

He used his knowledge and experience of walking, together with a capacity for detailed planning, to organise a number of very enjoyable trips for his club mates. It would have been much easier for him to go on long walks with a few strong walkers, but he usually preferred to take a large party, including many average, or even weak members. By good team work they were enabled to enjoy walks they could never have done on their own. He lead his parties by his quiet guidance and encouragement, never by assertion: which capacity is perhaps the measure of true democratic leadership. His unassuming manner, good humour and quiet persuasiveness, endeared him to all who knew him.

George Bruce Loder was a foundation member, and first Secretary of the Trampers Club of N.S.W. He was well known as club delegate to the Federation Council, and as Federation Publicity Officer in 1940-41. George Loder enlisted in the R.A.A.F. in May, 1941, and trained as an Observer. After doing brilliantly at training schools in Canada he arrived in England, and was posted to Lancasters. His work earned him selection for the Pathfinder Force, a commission in May, 1943, the D.F.C. and a Flight Lieutenantcy in October, 1943.

On 20th December, 1943, he failed to return from operations against Frankfurt, and was later reported to be buried at Doornspuyk in Holland. This was to have been his last trip as he had completed two tours on Pathfinders.

In George the Federation had one of its strongest supporters, as he didn't mind how much work he did where Conservation and his beloved bush was concerned. The Walking Fraternity as a whole, lost a real friend in George Loder.

Jack Wall was a likeable personality who carried out his duties as Treasurer of the Campfire Club with keenness and zest. A foundation member of the club, he early answered the call to arms. After aircrew training in Australia and England as a radio man, he was posted to Wellingtons in the Middle East. Flying Officer Jack Wall was lost whilst returning from a mission over the Adriatic Sea on the 7th July, 1944.

Ken Grenfell was a member of the Rucksack Club for only a short time before joining the Air Force. He lost his life in an air raid over Germany.

Mac Nichols joined the Y.M.C.A. Ramblers early in 1939, becoming Social Secretary and an enthusiastic member of the Ramblers' Basket Ball Team. Leaving his position with the Commonwealth Bank, he enlisted in the A.I.F., being sent to Malaya. At the early age of 21 years he was tragically killed in action at Singapore during February, 1942.

James McCormack was captain of the Y.M.C.A. Ramblers' Club Basket Ball Team, and a popular member of the staff of Eveready Batteries. Joining the R.A.A.F. he was attached for duty to H.M.A.S. "Canberra." As a result of wounds received in action he died on the 9th August, 1942, aged 21 years.

As we go to press we learn of two more members of the Sydney Bushwalkers to whom our debt is immeasurable, namely **Reginald Hewitt** and **Norman Saill**. We regret that short notice precludes mention of their Service records. They were bushwalkers, and their personalities live on in the hearts and minds of other bushwalkers.

The Federation hopes to be able to perpetuate the memory of these walkers in a fitting way by the naming of a prominent place possibly in the Gangerangs. The Gangerangs, rising up to the dominating Cloudmaker, flank some of the grandest scenery in the Blue Mountains and are practically surrounded by gorges which will stay the hands of those who may wish to change them.

The peak will probably be called ALCHERINGA —Place of the Spirits.

"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them."

—Laurence Binyon.

rowly averting disaster, till the fog lifted for two minutes and showed us our way around the deep gorge. When, later, the weather cleared, we could see that the righthand or eastern side of Kaputar is the easiest way off the peak.

North of Kaputar we kept to the top of the range which, like other volcanic formations, is a succession of high peaks and saddles. Capel, Pound, Lindesay and Cayaldi, all over 4,400 feet, were climbed and passed. Just before Pound Mountain we had our first glimpse of Mt. Grattai, fourteen miles away to the north, its 4,800 feet rising in isolated splendour. We decided that we must climb it. Last week's rain was now a benefit, for many pools were lying about and there was water a few hundred yards down any gully. To locate it in normal times, however, a drop of sometimes thousands of feet would be necessary for this region is usually very dry.

The weather was now splendid, and thick, white banks of cumulus clouds hung in the sky giving depth to the limitless views, east and west across the plains and along the mountains.

Eventually we reached Killarney Gap at an elevation of 2,500 feet and camped by the road from Bingara to Narrabri. Fast time had been made, thus compensating for the Kaputar incident, so next morning we set off for Grattai. A herd of wild goats, sixteen in all, made a glorious picture perched on a rocky ridge, their long, snow-white coats contrasting with the blue sky. Hoping for a photo, I followed them up the cliff and came upon two large white male goats intent upon a battle to the death. I watched for quite a while as they hurtled at each other, their long horns and heads clashing loudly, but finally disturbed them while taking photos from a few feet away.

Mt. Grattai displays a distinct bed of volcanic rock near the top, outcropping as a cliff on all sides. After negotiating this cliff we reached the top, which is a tiny plateau about 200 yards across. The vistas opened up as we walked around the edge were superb. Comparatively near, each of the peaks Courada, The Gins, Bobby Waa or Waa alone would be worth a trip. To describe one: The Gins (3,850 feet) has a crater at the vertical end while the other end, which was the lava flow, slopes like the curved back of a whale for three-quarters of a mile. Reluctantly we started on our way back to Killarney Gap.

Our journey was nearly over but we still had another surprise to see in this range of surprises. The Sawn Rocks we found up a small branch of Bobbiwa Creek, a few miles down from Killarney Gap. They consist of vertical hexagonal trachytc columns formed into a cliff 80 feet high and several hundred feet long. The hexagons are about fifteen inches across the flats and their patterns can be seen in the smooth worn creek bed at the base of the cliff, indicating that the columns penetrate some distance into the ground. Many of these monoliths lie on the ground below and a balcony effect is given when looking up at where they have broken off. The saw-tooth shape would be seen when looking down on the edges from the air.

It should be the object of all to preserve such wonders as these. At present there exists the Kaputar Recreation Reserve of 1,920 acres, and there did exist, until revoked in 1939, the Grattai Recreation Reserve of 9,000 acres. Perhaps these two areas could be linked by the intervening high land of the range, which is leased crown land and mostly unproductive, to form one large National Park.

To Bushwalkers the Nandewars have yet to give that thrill whicb comes on first seeing unknown country. Thougb it may be less amusing, we cannot have a local inhabitant, after puzzling over a rucksack, saying, "Is that something that goes on a horse?"

Our last view of the Nandewars was from Narrabri back across the plains. The late afternoon sun tinted them a light blue and emphasised their majesty over the darkening countryside.

OF DIVERS PESTS

"Fleas" said the Oldest Bush Walker, (hereinafter referred to as the O.B.W.) settling himself comfortably on the grass beside Evangeline, "fleas may be considered as one of the lesser evils of the insect world."

Evangeline, with her sleeping bag spread out before her, was going over the seams inch by inch with anxious care, looking for a certain disturber of her slumbers. The O.B.W.'s remark was therefore not as irrelevant as one might think.

"Take mosquitoes" he resumed, allowing his hand to stray almost unconsciously into a packet of raisins open nearby.

"You take mosquitoes," said Evangeline. "I have quite enough to do looking for one flea."

"Mosquitoes" said the O.B.W. in tones somewhat muffled by muscatels, "have wings. They can move swiftly from place to place. They stab and depart. They hunt in droves. As fast as you slay one, another takes up the attack. Or think of sandflies. They are much worse because they are practically invisible. They wait until nightfall to make their forays as though they knew that man is but a blind fool in the dark. But turning to the flea, what do we find?"

"I wish to goodness I could find him," said Evangeline.

"We find that he ventures forth all alone to pursue his monstrous quarry. Seldom is he seen hunting in pairs."

"I've often seen him hunting in shorts," said Charles, pausing to listen to the harangue. "By the way, O.B.W., did you ever hear the Song of the Flea?"

The O.B.W., something of a highbrow, fell into the trap.

"Ah yes — Moussorgsky. I once heard it sung by the great Chaliapin."

"Oh no — not that one," said Charles. "I was thinking of My Little Grey Home in the Vest"— and he departed, grinning a lowbrow grin.

The O.B.W. was nothing if not tenacious.

"As I was saying, he battles alone, and does not wait like a coward for the cover of darkness, but attacks in broad daylight. He is not a glutton: having taken a reasonable meal, he lies perdu to digest. He has no aerial means of escape, but relies solely on his agility to avoid capture. And here," said the O.B.W. warming to his subject, "is where a very simple technique will enable you to dispose of fleas without trouble. You should never become flurried. Having sighted the creature, you should wait until he has made his first leap. Then, before he can flex his knees for the second jump, you should wet your forefinger on the tip of the tongue—so —and place it hurriedly with a good follow-through movement, on the luckless flea."

He broke off suddenly, flinching as though from some deep-seated anguish.

"That's all very well," began Evangeline argumentatively, "but the trouble is first to sight your flea."

The O.B.W. was not listening. A glazed look had come into his eyes. He rose hastily, making an involuntary clutch at his trouser-leg. (He was wearing longs).

"Excuse me," he said, and dived into his tent.

"Practice must of course, improve one's technique."

Evangeline called after him, hanging up her sleeping bag in the sun with a sigh of relief.

The N.S.W. Federation of Bushwalking Clubs

Recognition of the fact that union is strength brought the Federation into being in 1932. Since then it has steadily grown in size and has always shown an active interest in the preservation of our bushlands and in conservation. Three clubs—the Caloola Club, the Walkabout Club and the St. George Bushwalking Club—have joined the Federation since our last issue, making seventeen affiliated clubs in all.

Most of the work accomplished by the Federation this year has been unspectacular "grind". However, on its representations, the Forestry undertook to keep the fine stand of gum trees on the top of Mt. Coricudgy, near Rylstone, as a primitive area. This will give pleasure to those fortunate people who have walked under these lovely trees which are also valuable from a commercial point of view.

War was continued on the bush fire menace. Suggestions for posters which were given to the Bush Fires Advisory Committee were adopted and fresh suggestions offered for next year. It was also suggested that special constables with motor bikes and side cars be appointed to endeavour to apprehend people who burn the bush to promote the growth of young fern for commercial reasons. A subcommittee was appointed to make further practical suggestions in a campaign to impress upon the public that the bush is public property and just as valuable as houses. In this work the Federation enlisted the aid of the Bush Fires Advisory Committee, the Local Government Association, the Local Government Department and the Rangers League.

As a result of the Petition for the Prohibition of the Sale of Wild Flowers presented last year, the Minister for Local Government set afoot extensive enquiries as to how many wild flowers sold were actually grown as distinct from being plucked from the bush. In the upshot, a bill was passed, not prohibiting the sale of wild flowers altogether but providing that the only wild flowers which might be sold were those grown by licensed growers. The act had the result of enormously decreasing the sale of wild flowers and where as Martin Place, for instance, had been a mass of boronia in early Spring, in Spring 1945 not a bloom was to be seen there. Despite this vast improvement there was reason to believe that many wild flowers sold by the growers were not actually cultivated at all and the Federation is taking further steps to try to eliminate these.

The Kosciusko Liaison Committee was formed to prepare a constitution, the object of which is to bring together the recreationalists who go to Kosciusko and to try to arrive at a common policy. The Kosciusko State Park with its opportunities for walking and ski-ing should be used for the enjoyment of all but, at the same time, it must be zealously guarded from an exploitation which comes near to vandalism. Your active interest in this objective and in others helps to make the Federation a potent force in the community.

Acknowledgments

Once again we wish to express our thanks for the assistance given by members in the preparation of this magazine and to our contributors including those whom the exigencies of our space prevent us from publishing. For the cover photo we are indebted to David Stead, and for the line drawings to Andrew Sprott. "Paddy" was, as usual, most helpful and not only in providing accommodation for the Publications Committee. Various blocks which have been donated bear their own acknowledgements.

Rocks Tell a Story

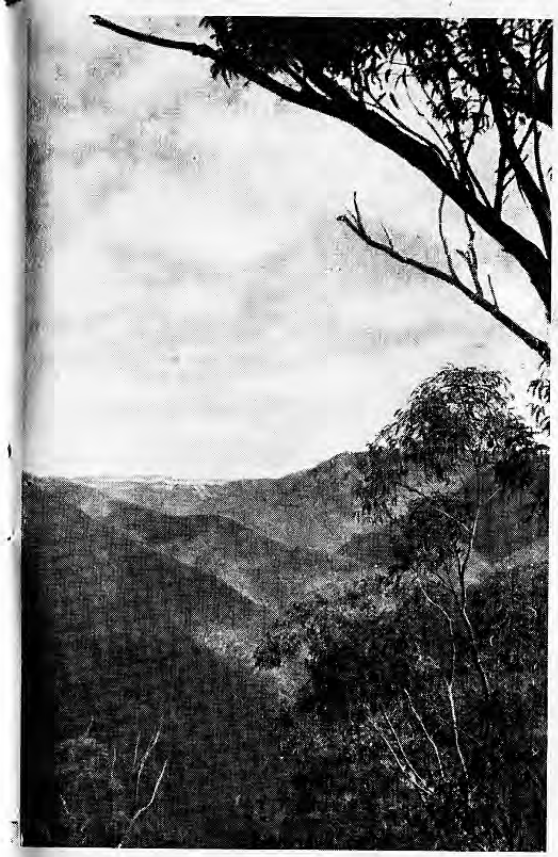
GRACE NOBLE

To the casual observer, sheer cliffs and tremendous gorges suggest catastrophic unheavals in the earth's history. Actually, even the most fantastic structures can be explained by processes seen in action today—though these may have been much intensified in past time.

The columns of dark basaltic rock which appear in the small island off the mouth of the Minnamurra River seem inevitably to bring to mind the legend-haunted Cornish Coast, the Antrim basalts of Ireland and the islands of the Hebrides. (Remember the mysterious airs of Mendelssohn's Fingal's Overture—the very cave itself is formed by just such columns.) It may be that the human mind is so affected by its environment that wherever rocks of the same structure and origin appear, similar legends will also arise; but however this may be, it is fascinating to think that all these rocks, including those of our own South Coast and some as far off as Antarctica, have all been formed in some bygone era of widespread volcanic activity when such rocks were poured out over the earth's surface as terrifically hot molten sheets or injected between rocks already formed. The characteristic six-sided columns are due to strains set up during cooling under very steady conditions. A similar very regular system of cracking may be seen when very homogeneous mud dries up. The action of wind and wave, making their way along lines of weaknesses between the columns, has left the remnants standing as the grotesque monuments we see today.

At the other extreme of temperature, we have in the Kosciusko region evidence of an age which produced first an ice-cap and later a number of individual glaciers, the last of which disappeared only from 10,000 to 15,000 years ago. Traces of these, such as granite pavements grooved deeply by the boulders carried under a glacier, occur along the shores of Lake Albina; moraines or piles of boulders and mud dropped by the glaciers, have helped by their dam-like action to form the lakes. The extremely deep pot-holes in solid granite rock, (those in the illustration go to about 6 feet below the water line) occur in the little gorge on the Snowy just above its junction with the creek coming from Blue Lake. This is below the area where much evidence of glacier action occurs but, since such holes are formed by the circular grinding action of boulders moved by swiftly moving waters, this action has been intensified by the very rapid stream coming from the lowest point of a glacier.

To come nearer home, one of the most characteristic features of our mountains is the presence of vertical sandstone cliffs surmounting more gentle tree-covered slopes of softer and more easily weathered rocks of an earlier age. This effect confronts us most spectacularly at Kanangra where the vertical cliffs of horizontally bedded sandstone appear on one side only of the gorge. These are underlain, first of all by the soft, shaly coal seam in which the cave occurs, and then by steeply tilted quartzitic and slaty rocks of a much older period, which also form the spires on the opposite side. To the geologist, such a sharp break in the character of the rocks and their slope suggests that the earlier underlying rocks must have been deposited, subjected to terrific mountain-building movements, over a long period of time, uplifted to a great height and worn down to a fairly level plain which then formed the floor of the sea in which was deposited the present sandstone cliffs. After all this the whole mass would have to be again uplifted to its present height, so that water and other weathering agents could carve out the gorges.

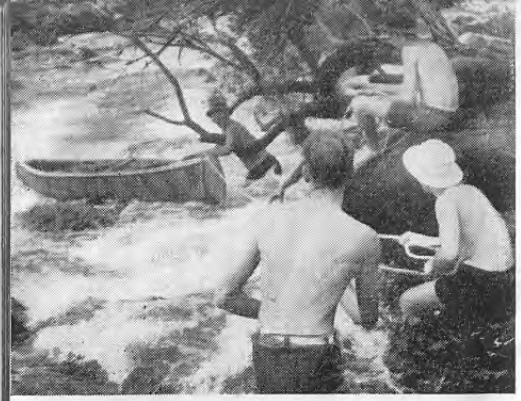


"Kanangra—distant view"
by Brian Harvey

"Minnamurra Mouth"
by Douglas Johnstone

"Snowy River Rocks"
by Grace Noble

Geological Patterns



White Water

Photographs by Jim McRorie, as published in "A.P.R." Magazine. Grateful acknowledgment is made to Kodak (Aust.) Pty. Ltd. for the use of these blocks.

The Upper Snowy

Canoeing and Walking from Kosciusko Summit to Dalgety

TED CONSTABLE

Our exploration of the Snowy River source began when we sprang down from the truck that had obligingly hitch-hiked us as far as the Etheridge Range. Using Seaman's Hut as our base camp we spent some days climbing the surrounding peaks. We viewed the awe-inspiring panorama of the Geehi Valley from Townsend; the sheer precipices of Northcote Canyon; the intriguing granite formations, the snowdrifts, the cascades and waterfalls leading from them, the various lakes with their borders of snow-daisies. This region is an appropriate birthplace for Australia's most turbulent and probably most romantic river.

Reluctantly leaving Seaman's Hut, we made tracks across the Ramshead Range and down on to a most important Snowy tributary, the Crackenback River. Trying to save time by cutting corners landed us in incredibly thick scrub, so thick that it was easier to climb among the branches than wrestle through the botanical morass on the lower level. Once on the banks of the Crackenback the going was extremely easy with mobs of kangaroos and an occasional wombat to add interest. Being "canoe-minded" folk, we decided that this stream would probably be at its best around about October, and what a trip it would be—one long rapid from start to finish.

Continuing our walk, we did the stretch between Pendelea and Jindabyne at night and pitched camp opposite Jindabyne Hotel on the Snowy River bank. This concluded the walking section of our holiday and on the following day we were to start a canoe trip down the Snowy River from Jindabyne. We came in for a great deal of criticism from the "locals" and heard the same old tales of canyons with sheer walls hundreds of feet high, of underground rivers, floods that come without warning, forty foot waterfalls and "things down there". To cap it all, the town wit wanted to measure us for coffins. The ensuing hilarity left us a trifle crestfallen but we set off in the mid-afternoon with half the population waving from the hillside and about a mile below the town shot the first rapid, known locally as the old mill. Then we began a number of small rapids connected in series and culminating in rather a tricky piece of work at the beginning of the gorge.

The canoe, "Kia Ora", took the bit in her teeth and attacked a large slab of granite in mid rapid. The granite won easily and there was the canoe wedged across a couple of rocks and we frantically trying to salvage gear. My cobber, Ken, lost his footing and was whisked off down stream to reappear some time later wearing only a hat. This spill necessitated an early camp and the only available camp spot was already occupied by a very dead dog.

On Sunday morning there were boat repairs to be done but we set off after lunch. This was a glorious day of thrills and I say without hesitation that the quality and number of the rapids put the Upper Snowy in the first rank of rapid rivers. Late in the afternoon we came to a "boomer", that is, a rapid with three and four foot waves curling down its entire length. Our course down this one had been well and truly plotted but we didn't take into account a strong puff of wind that turned the nose of the canoe off course just as it shot over the brink. We zig-zagged along, trying to straighten out, but a small waterfall put the finishing touches to us and we completed the shoot underwater. We made camp here and would have dried out if it hadn't rained.

Monday morning found us again in high spirits bouncing down this canoeists' paradise and at midday we came to what I shall call the first canyon. The river here was just a mass of churning white foam whirlpools and waterfalls. These called for a portage of a quarter mile over slippery granite boulders and, when we tired of carrying the canoe, we relaxed by carrying our three hundredweight of gear over the same boulders. Of course we did not neglect to take photos of all this to impress the folk back home.

Xmas Day was spent similarly except for a bit of climbing to spy out the land and, cheers, there in the distance was a fodder shed standing in clear rolling country. A fodder shed meant a station nearby but it must be remembered that there was still half a mile of canyon between us and civilisation. To get through this half mile took most of Boxing Day. On one occasion it was necessary to paddle across stream just above a series of falls. Naturally we "only just made it" and whilst recovering from the inevitable dark brown taste in the mouth were fortunate enough to witness the rare sight of a duck shooting a rapid.

Once out of the canyon we ran the gauntlet of a rams' paddock to get to the nearby station which was deserted. Could this be a variation of the Marie Celeste mystery? We located the meat safe, about ten feet square with the wire gauze doing its best to keep out millions of flies. Should we snatch a leg of mutton and run for it? No! We would adopt the genteel approach and camp nearby, the people would invite us to dinner and, as we left, would present us with a billy of milk, a dozen chops and a newly picked pumpkin, all of which we would grab greedily whilst admonishing them for their undue generosity. While looking for a camp site we located the entire family round a bend in the river and, when they spotted us, there was much tidying of picnic things and snatching of nude babies from the water. Our great expectations were dashed when the spokesman curtly informed us that there were good campsites further down and that the Snowy water was good to drink. Never have I seen country people so much like city people.

The nine mile stretch between this station and Dalgety was completed the following day and was one long joy ride with easy rapids and currents: a classic for the canoeist who likes it easy. But even if they are easy, they require a certain amount of attention and whilst in the middle of a heated argument as to whether some animals on the bank were angora goats or highland sheep we ran into bother again in an S bend rapid. This time the canoe sank well down under water, wedged tightly and took at least two hours to extricate. Once again I had to secretly dispose of a lot of broken pieces of canoe ribs so that Ken wouldn't feel too hadly ahout the care the canoe was getting.

We limped into Dalgety in the teeth of a howling gale on Thursday afternoon, and, although we wore some of the sheepskins that didn't get to Russia, our teeth chattered so much we could hardly tell the hotel proprietress we preferred "it" with water. We took it straight and for the first time had undiluted rum in a hotel. This unexpected honesty on the part of the publican took our breath away almost as much as the throat-searing spirit and, much to the amusement of Dad and Dave at the other end of the bar, we nearly coughed our hearts up.

My conversation with Dave was short and to the point and reads like a passage from Henry Lawson's prose:

I: Nice weather.
Dave: My oath!
I: Good rain?
Dave: My crimson oath!
I: Need it?
Dave: My crimson, crimson oath!

Horrible glances from the barmaid as we left to arrange for transport home!

proached; and the wind was working up a hurricane fury. Day had already dawned, when the elements unleashed their worst upon us. The water was coming down the mountain-side in cascades, and I could already feel it seeping through my sleeping-bag. In a few minutes everything we had was saturated. "The Seaman Hut!" I exclaimed, as I hastily tried to pack away my gear. The water squelched out of my sleeping-bag, as I pushed it into my rucksack. We knew that we were not far from the motor-road to the summit and that, when once we were on the road, we simply had to follow it to the Seaman Hut. But the 2½ miles that intervened between us and our objective were a via dolorosa. The mist was so dense that we could see only about twenty yards ahead; and the wind was so strong that our ground-sheets were uselessly flying out in front of us, seeming to permit the icy-cold rain to be driven into the very marrow of our bones! We tried to yell to each other, but the gale howled louder; and, when I tried to speak, I found that I could not articulate my words, because my lips were frozen. At length we could discern the shape of the Seaman Hut through the mist.

When we arrived at the hut, Wal and I proceeded to make ourselves comfortable. In the ante-room there was plenty of good firewood stored, and a first-class axe. There were clothes-lines already suspended before a family-sized fuel stove. We had just finished hanging out all our wet belongings, and were working the fire up to a vigorous warmth, when we were disturbed by a terrific hammering on the door of the hut. Opening the door, I saw a gaunt, spectral figure before me, with water trickling down his livid cheeks. For a moment he stood motionless and silent, and then his lips opened to emit a torrent of abuse such as I had never heard before. (In case his friends

think he is a gentleman, I shall keep the man's identity a secret). From what I could gather, he was trying to blame someone for hiding the Seaman Hut from him and his companion, who had just appeared on the scene. However, as soon as they heard the crackling of the fire, they both made a bee-line for the stove. After thawing out sufficiently they told us their story.

They had been camping on Mount Ramshead, when the blizzard came down upon them. For a while they tried to take refuge from the wind by crouching among the tall boulders of Ramshead, but wherever they went the wind and rain circled round and caught them. They had noticed the Seaman Hut indicated on their map, but they did not know exactly where it was in relation to their position. So they decided to steer a compass course until they found it. The invective I sustained was the natural outlet to the pent-up despair they sufferred, as they struggled through the mist and the blinding rain. But now they had attained their heart's desire and, after we had all eaten breakfast, the four of us felt quite normal again. There were two bedrooms in the hut, and there were two iron bedsteads in each bedroom: so each party had a bedroom, and each man had a bed. Everything was working out neatly; and we talked of bushwalks and bushwalkers, while the tempest raged without.

At this juncture it would be as well to refer to the origin of the Seaman Hut. On August 16th, 1928, the newspapers reported that two skiers, Messrs. Evan Hayes and W. Laurie Seaman, had been lost in a blizzard, while trying to reach the summit of Mount Kosciusko. Weather conditions were so bad that, despite desperate efforts by ski parties and by aeroplanes to locate them, it was announced on August 20th, that further attempts at rescue would be useless. On September 9th, 1928, Laurie Seaman's body was found, covered with snow, at a spot where the hut now stands. Financed by a gift of £150 sent from New York, U.S.A., by Mr. W. H. Seaman, father of the unfortunate skier, the hut was completed and officially opened on the 17th May, 1929, the opening ceremony being performed by the then Chief Secretary, Mr. Chaffey. But it was not until the 31st December, 1929, that the body of Evan Hayes was discovered about 300 yards from Lake May.

At an altitude of 6636 feet above sea level, the "memorial chalet" (as Mr. Chaffey called it) has walls composed of granite rubble packed with concrete, and surfaced on the inside with an insulating material. On a tablet of polished granite are recorded the circumstances leading up to the erection of the hut. A bome foursquare, challenging the relentless fury of the heavens, it is a fair example of what could be done in the matter of erecting shelters. Nor does it disturb the harmony of the surroundings, as huts are apt to do. Symmetrically built under the supervision of the Government Architect, and with local materials predominating, it "tones in" with the general landscape.

Returning to my narrative, I have to state that all our belongings were dry by nightfall of the day we entered the hut. The blizzard lasted throughout the next day, but toward evening the weather began to clear, and December the 30th, dawned a perfect day. It was then that we saw the Australian Alps in all their summer glory. A cloudless sky, with scarcely a ripple of wind, brought out all the colourings in the rocks. Nature always more than compensates her votaries for any inconvenience she imposes upon them. Like Robert Louis Stevenson after his night among the pines, I somehow felt indebted to someone for the hospitality I had received. Though I could not express my gratitude to the living, at least I can feel grateful to the spirit of Laurie Seaman, whose sad death made it possible for us to enjoy Kosciusko when it can best be enjoyed—immediately after a blizzard.

The Bushwalker

He moves in glorious freedom through the land
From mountain's peak to ocean's golden strand,
And gains much strength and gladness, and a joy
Unknown to minds that city pleasures cloy.
He climbs the hills to plateaux where
He fills his lungs with fresh, keen air,
And then descends through valley's verdure green
To rest beside the sparkling mountain stream,
Perhaps to plunge therein for brief respite
From noonday's heat.
At eve he makes his camp
Beneath the stately columns of the gums,
And then reclines at ease before the campfire's glow,
To gaze at stars that only bushmen know.
He lies upon the fragrant earth to sleep,
And listens to the creatures of the night
Upon their busy ways.
Then Mother Nature smiles upon her child,
And grants to him a sense of peace unburdened.

—Colin Smith.

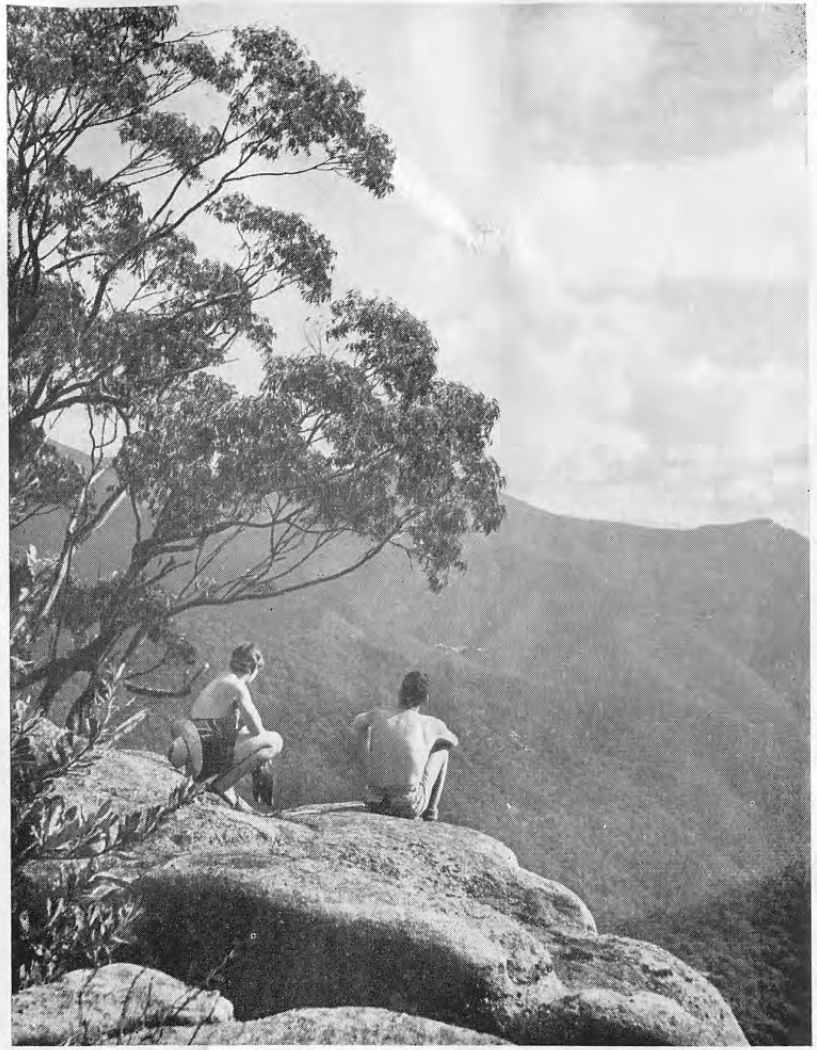
On Working Bees

The Working Bee is becoming a feature of the Bush Walking world; the organisation is so complete and the propaganda so subtle that crowds go to them with happy abandon of mediaeval martyrs going to the stake. A word or two of praise should be given to the organisers of these efforts—usually one or more trustees of the park where the work takes place, trying to eke out a meagre grant or income. However, there was one small effort—the dam at Era—by a few individuals for the benefit of the many.

The Bouddi Working Bees—of which there have been two since our last issue—have established themselves as a model and Chief Organiser, Marie Byles, spares no pain in making them successful. She never takes her finger off the working arrangements though content so long as the campfire and entertainment are in capable hands. The numbers attending at Bouddi are sufficient to justify the reserving of several railway carriages and, this year, a special boat to Killcare.

The most recent camp site was Maitland Bay which, though very attractive to look at, is not well suited to camping large numbers of people. However, the previous camp was at Tiny Beach where well sheltered grassy plots and little valleys right at the cliffs' edge provided excellent camp sites. The campfire was one of the most memorable—situated on the beach of the tiny cove with cliffs all around and with the crowd ranged on the rising ground. The moon came up over the ocean backcloth and one remarked "How lucky" as inanely as one does at Easter—for the working bee is as closely linked to the full moon as is Easter.

As we go to press a Blue Gum Working Bee is almost upon us. Work there is confined to the keeping of Govett's Leap Creek in a channel which will not undermine the forest. You could not work in lovelier surroundings and you will be allowed an occasional look up from your spade to the trees and the sky. You know the modern trend to music while you work and "hair do" by arrangement but is this not preferable?



Block donated by Rucksack Club — R. Cotter

Grey Sky and Blue Mountains

N.Z. Scene by George Dibley Block donated by St. George Bushwalking Club

Mount Ruapehu

Ski-ing — The Hard Way

R. SHUMACK

During the Easter holidays, 1945, three members of my club completed a walking tour from Adaminaby, across the top of the main range to Jagungal, the Tin Hut and the Hotel Kosciusko. The discovery of two recently erected stockman's huts in this area made it possible to plan a ski tour for the coming winter.

In the months of preparation and organisation which preceded the trip, we were able to get a stockman to transport 70lb. of food, by pack-horse, to one of these huts before the snow sets in. In our rucksacks we carried another 75lb. total of food, plus clothing, sleeping bags, and all the equipment to maintain a fortnight's complete isolation and meet every conceivable minor emergency.

So it happened that on the morning of July 21st, the five members of our party bestirred themselves from their various sleeping berths on the floor, seats and luggage racks of the Kosciusko express, to survey the frost whitened landscape at Cooma. In less time than it took to be properly awake, we boarded a car and were whisked away to the even more frost-bound town of Adaminaby. After a good breakfast we motored a further nine miles across the Eucumbene River to the foot of the main range.

Climbing steeply a spur to the west of Russell's farm was the track that led to the top of the range and into the mysteriously enticing snow country beyond. Behind us shining silver in the morning sun, lay the Eucumbene River, and here and there, patches of snow, like carelessly scattered talcum powder. With 45lb. packs and skis to be carried, progress was slow.

After several hours climb the track levelled out, and there, in deep snow we donned the now very necessary "Slip-sticks". Ahead of us still, outlining its 5,800 feet against the skyline lay Mt. Addicumbene—our last big obstacle.

From near the summit we had our first refreshing descent of about half a mile to Happy Jack's plain which lay white and frozen below us.

By this time we were thoroughly tired out, and as the day drew to a close, our reserves of energy drained away like the last rays of the sun on the surrounding hills. While the moon shone down on a scene as cold, silent, and desolate as a barren planet, we pushed desperately with leaden skis across the plain until one last heart-breaking herring-bone brought us to our haven of refuge—the galvanised iron "V" hut. Un-insulated, this hut was like a freezing chamber—water brought inside formed a thick coating of ice overnight—but still it was shelter.

After a day of rest and repair at the "V" hut we pushed on once more, under a cloudless blue sky, for our base camp ten miles distant. Several hours of steady ski-ing—uninspiring except for an occasional glimpse of Jagungal rising white and majestic to the south—brought us to a wide shallow valley, at the end of which lay Mackays Hut. We were relieved to find our tins of food intact.

On one of the mornings that followed, we set out on our eagerly awaited excursion to Jagungal—8 miles distant. This necessitated following a route via Doubtful River, Farm Ridge Hut, and Bogong Hut which nestles 1500 feet below the summit of the "Big Bogong".

By midday we had climbed above the treeline, traversed the broad white western face, and shed our skis at the foot of the rocky outcrop which marks the summit of this 6820 foot peak. A short scramble up the last few feet to the stone cairn, and we were on top of the world

In the numbing cold of this high

altitude we did not tarry long but, heart in mouth, looked down fearfully upon the steep two-mile descent to the hut. In about the time that it takes to extricate oneself from a snowdrift about sixteen times, we had swooped down from our mountain ecrie, bulldozed our way through the woodrun, and arrived with a neat little "schuss" at the hut door. Twelve hours on the move found us still exhilarated as we arrived "home" at sunset.

After ten days at Mackays Hut, during which time we made, amongst others, an excursion to the top of far Bald Mountain, we returned to the Bogong Hut, this time fully packed and en-route—we hoped to Hotel Kosciusko.

Barring our path was the 6000 ft. range behind Jagungal. It was snowing, and in deep powder snow, using climbing cords and skins, we ploughed resolutely up the ridge. Steadily weather conditions became worse, and as we breasted the top of the range, we were struck by the full force of the blizzard. In a swirling storm of flying snow, shadow and contour, earth and sky, disappeared in a world of blinding white. Wind torn holes and patches of ice made ski-ing almost impossible, but most demoralising was the lack of visibility and the inability to hear or speak in the howling wind. The difficulty of using a compass under these conditions has to be experienced to be realised.

Falling to avoid an unseen cornice, I lost one of my skis which went sailing into the void. Our predicament was assuming tragic proportions. There was notbing for it but to remove the other ski and wallow down the cornice in waist-deep snow—too steep for ski-ing anyway. By a thousand-to-one chance the ski overturned and lodged in a hollow, where we found it, not 100 feet down the mountainside.

We were now sheltered from the wind, and circulation began painfully to return to our frozen hands. We put on our skis once more and began descending to the valleys on the northern side of the range in the hope of recognising part of the river system near Bogong Hut. Eventually after a tedious descent, we came upon part of the spur which we had climbed earlier in the day. Spirits revived, it was no time before we arrived cold and hungry to spend another night in the shelter of the hut.

A pink flush on the white slopes of Jagungal, heralded the dawn of a perfect day. The rising sun shed its rays on a scene of entrancing beauty. Transformed, in their frozen mantles of a million sparkling facets, the trees on the wooded slopes of the range stood like a forest of glass. Under a thick carpet of virgin snow, rocks and bushes rose like monstrous toadstools amidst a fairy tracery of bejewelled foliage.

We quickly breakfasted, packed and set out confident of success on our second attempt to reach Mawson's Hut. At the top of the range, great holes scooped out by the force of the wind, and in places, snow packed hard in waves, bore mute evidence of the fury of the blizzard. The southern slopes of the range we found to be almost entirely glazed over with wind-swept ice, making our descent with heavy rucksacks a most hazardous undertaking.

Throwing caution to the winds, we put skis together for the last few hundred feet and rattled down to the valley floor. From there we followed a compass bearing across featureless snowy wastes to Mawson's Hut. Here we met a party from Alpine Hut who informed us that the Tin Hut, where we intended to camp for the night, was snowed under. In these circumstances we abandoned our trip via Hotel Kosciusko and took advantage of a kind offer to stay overnight at the Alpine Hut, and obtained transport from Snowy Plains in the morning.

So ended our first real experience of ski-touring in conditions more rugged and exacting, but immeasurably more satisfying, than any experience at a luxury hotel.

THE N.S.W. 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 Bush Club.
The Caloola 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 St. George Bushwalking Club.
The Sydney Bush Walkers.
The Trampers' Club of N.S.W.
The Walkabout Club.
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 may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary of the Federation:—

Miss M. B. BYLES, 4 Castlereagh Street, Sydney.

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