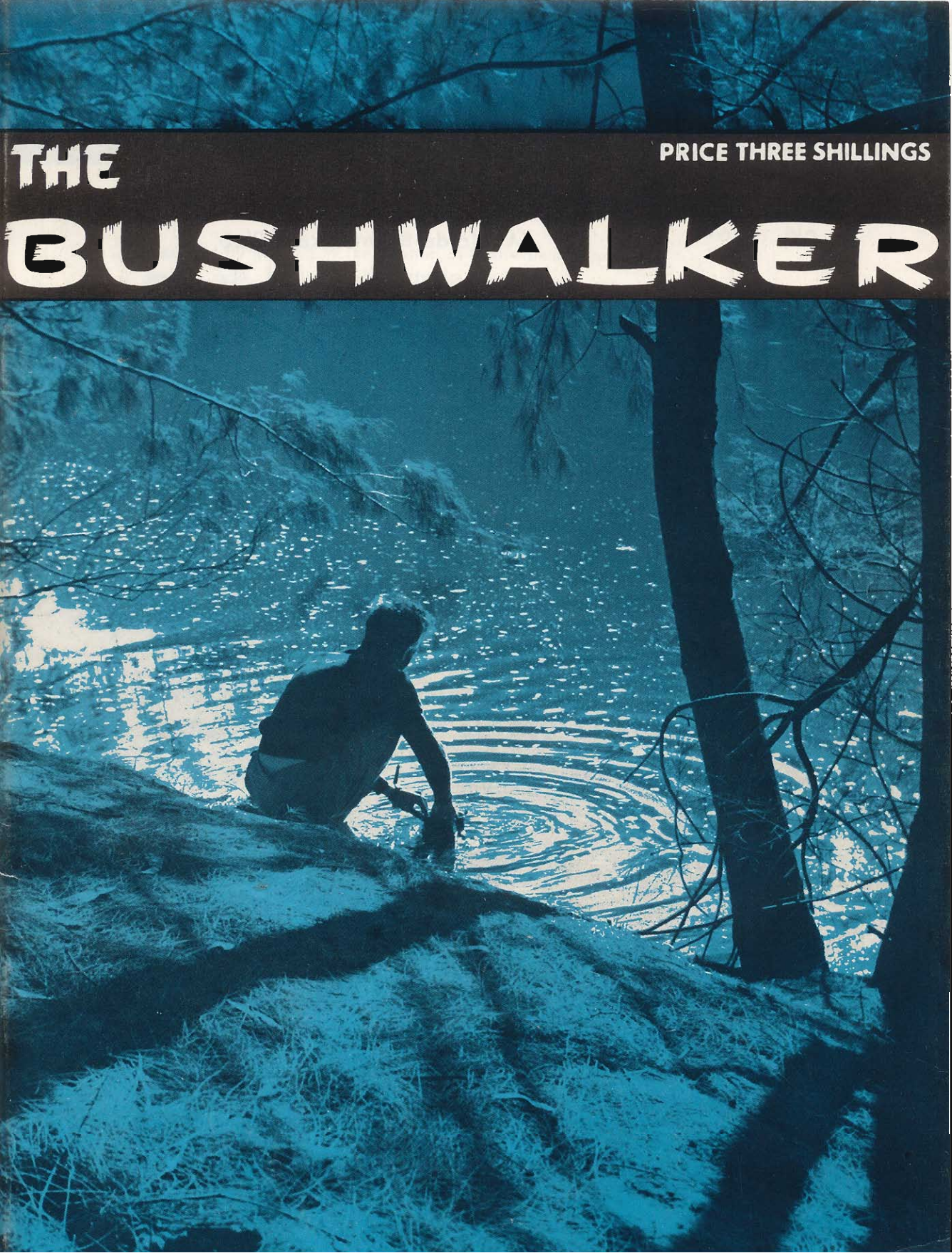
THE BUSHWALKER

PRICE THREE SHILLINGS



New South Wales Federation of Bushwalking Clubs

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THE BUSHWALKER

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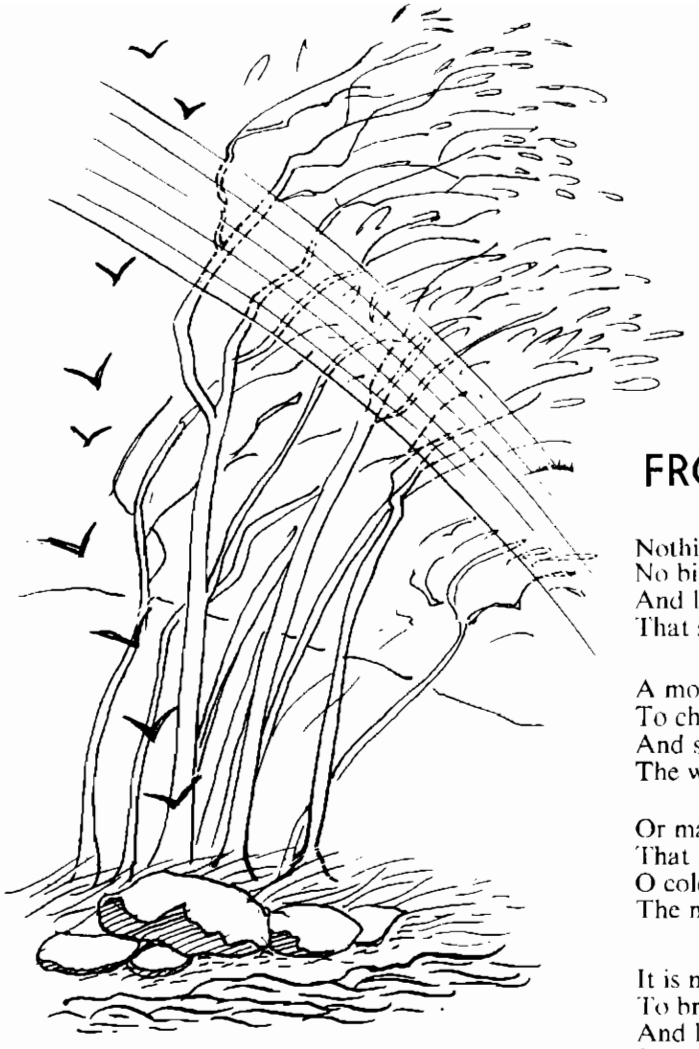
The Federation, which has twenty-two affiliated member clubs, has the combined objects of uniting people interested in bushwalking and similar activities, and of conserving the bushlands.



FROZEN FOREST

Nothing plucks the strings of life,
No birds converse on air their strife
And leaves hang limp above the grass
That stretches smooth as polished glass.

A monk might clutch the monstrous calm
To chill the reading of his psalm
And summon mystery to flood
The warmer instincts of the blood.

Or mate dumb silence to his cell
That holds the same unearthly spell
O cold, still wood and could not know
The music when the great trees blow.

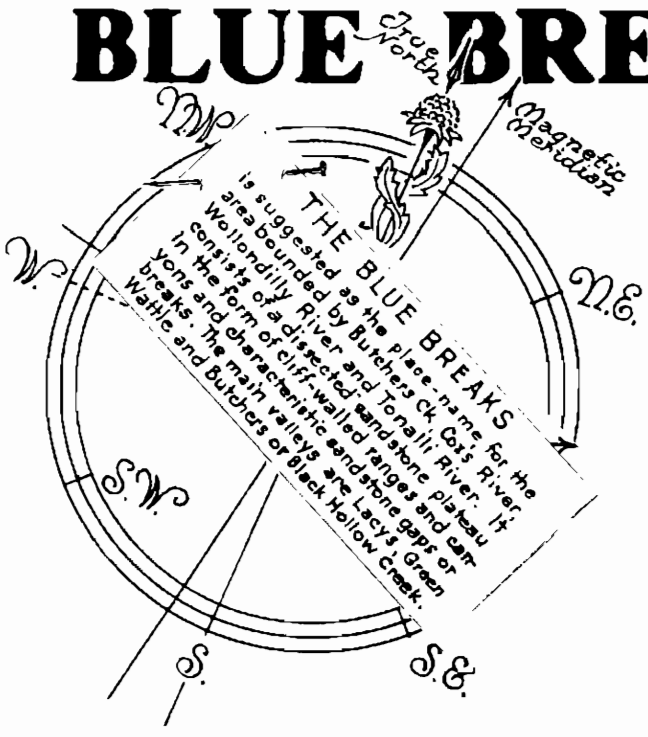
It is no sacrilege to shout,
To bring the merry echoes out
And laughter to the forest face,
Severely lined in death-like grace.

Come bladed wind and lusty noise,
Firm footsteps and the certain joys
Of rainbow wing, the swift descent
Of yellow robbins earthward bent.

All sap and blood one tumbled stream,
Incessant striving to a scheme
Of struggle and enduring fight,
Creation, reaching for the light.

—Bernard Peach, C.M.W.

THE BLUE BREAKS



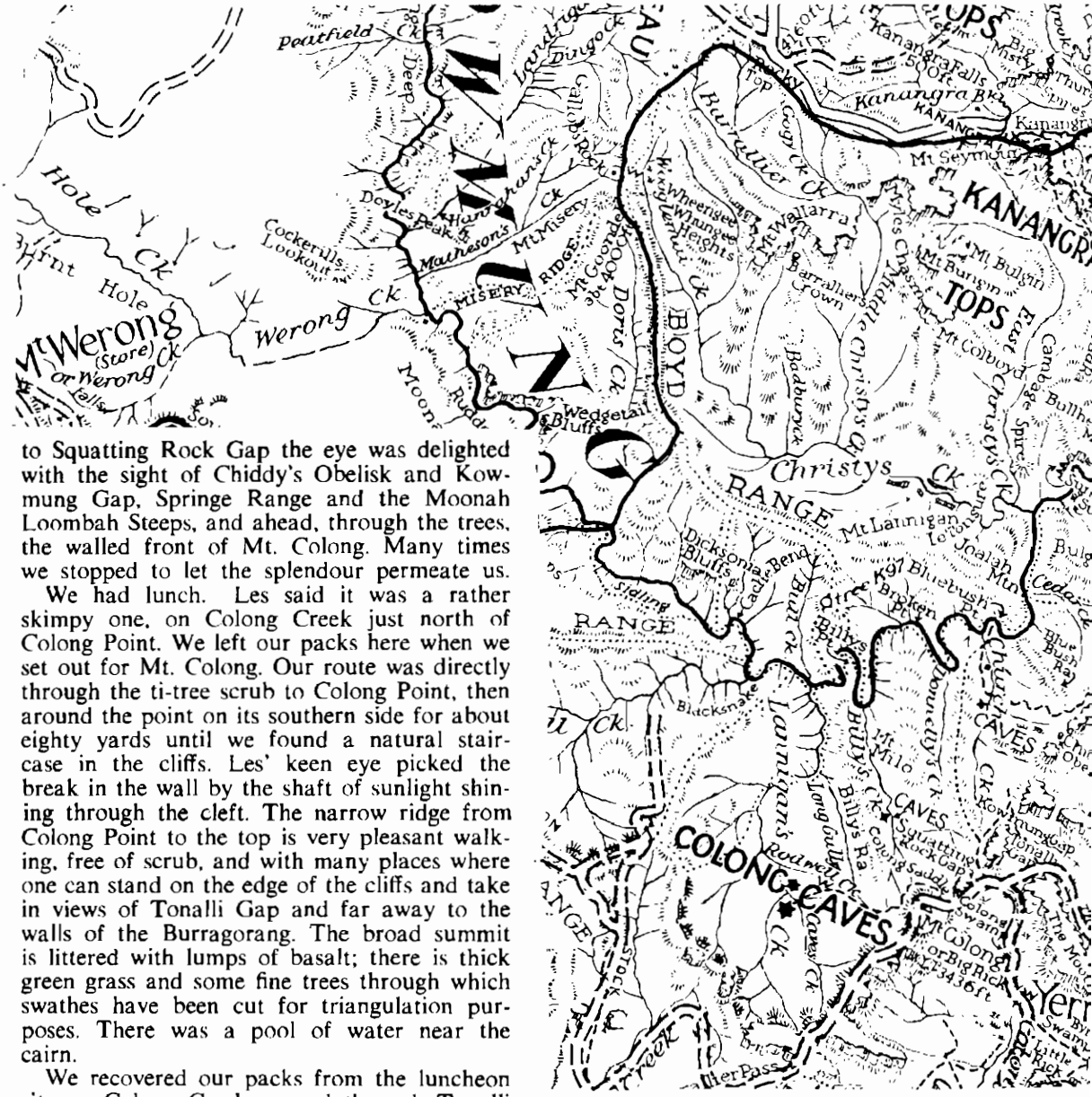
By Pat Harrison—Kamerukas

. . . gulped a cup of coffee while chatting at Whalan's Hut, snatched quick mouthful of food and then set out for Kanangra Walls and the beginning of our holiday. September 8th, 1963, 12.15 p.m. and a glorious crisp day when we shouldered our heavy packs and set out for Maxwell's Hillock, where we tarried long enough to see the jagged maze of cliffs, peaks and gaps which make up the Colong Maze and the Blue Breaks: our tramping ground for the next few days. What a wonderful sight is Mt. Colong, Yerranderrie Peak, Bull Island Peak, and the Broken Rock seen from the Kanangra Plateau. And what an invitation is offered to penetrate their orange-walled cliffs and chasms.

Our packs were heavy, but we made steady progress along the well-defined route to Bullhead Corner and then along the somewhat scrubby ridge to Bullhead Mountain. After Bullhead the ridge becomes narrower and steeper- until it becomes Cambage Spire itself. The Spire itself is easily negotiated by descending the first few feet of its nose and then traversing to the left down slabs which have grooves in the right places for hands and feet.

The green shelf at the junction of Christy's Creek and the Kowmung was reached at 4.40 p.m., giving us ample time for the first night's cooking and camping. My mate looked after the firewood and the mashed potatoes while I took the less skilful tasks of boiling up the mixed DV and putting up the tent. Les is undoubtedly the best in the world at transforming dried spuds into the most delicious mouth watering food. We maintained this division of duty through the trip. Our camp site was pleasant and impressive. The rushing Kowmung with its steep eastern ridges, the Boyd Range to the west, Christy's, Le Tonsure and the wild Kanangra country, and the unbelievably steep Cambage Spire cradle the area.

MONDAY, 9th September. Beautifully clear, crisp and cloudless. We set out at 8.25 a.m. heading upstream on the western bank of the Kowmung determined to make only one crossing. After pausing near the Blue Bush Range for a last look at Cambage standing up through the casuarinas we crossed the high running river just below Church Creek, then climbed over the low ridge into Church Creek itself. Here we spent forty minutes basking in the sun, removing gravel from our socks and disposing of some delicacies before beginning the climb to Mt. Armour. From Mt. Armour

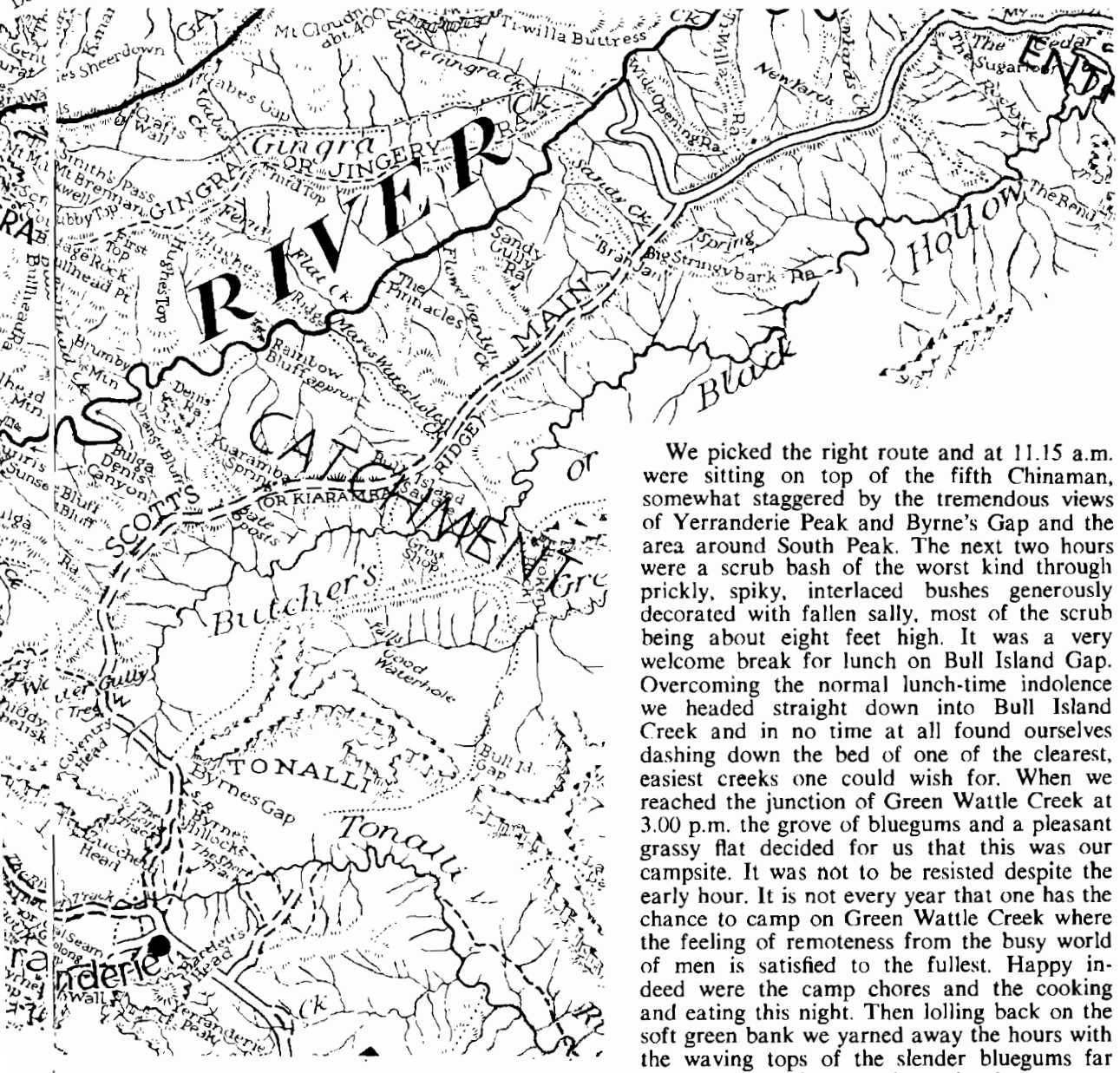


to Squatting Rock Gap the eye was delighted with the sight of Chiddy's Obelisk and Kowmung Gap, Springe Range and the Moonah Loombah Steeps, and ahead, through the trees, the walled front of Mt. Colong. Many times we stopped to let the splendour permeate us.

We had lunch. Les said it was a rather skimpy one, on Colong Creek just north of Colong Point. We left our packs here when we set out for Mt. Colong. Our route was directly through the ti-tree scrub to Colong Point, then around the point on its southern side for about eighty yards until we found a natural staircase in the cliffs. Les' keen eye picked the break in the wall by the shaft of sunlight shining through the cleft. The narrow ridge from Colong Point to the top is very pleasant walking, free of scrub, and with many places where one can stand on the edge of the cliffs and take in views of Tonalli Gap and far away to the walls of the Burragorang. The broad summit is littered with lumps of basalt; there is thick green grass and some fine trees through which swathes have been cut for triangulation purposes. There was a pool of water near the cairn.

We recovered our packs from the luncheon site on Colong Creek, passed through Tonalli Gap and dropped down onto the old Limestone Road and jogged round to Yerranderie, arriving there at 6.15 p.m. We selected an upstairs room in the deserted Post Office for our night's abode. Firewood was collected in the dark and soon a fire was roaring up the chimney. I used to work with an old Post Office man who never tired of telling me how, in the early 'thirties, he looked forward to coming to Yerranderie for three weeks to relieve the Postmaster. I had a thought for him on the morrow when I stepped out on the balcony to look across at the tremendous breaks in the cliffs of the Tonalli Range which are Byrne's Gap and Bull Island Gap. I once knew a man who spent thirty days and nights in the deserted Post Office; as he claimed to have seen a ghost while he was there I was glad I did not think of him. Ghost or not, this is a free chalet with one of the best outlooks in the country.

TUESDAY, 10th September, and the weather still serene. After passing through East Yerranderie we headed for the Tonalli River at the foot of Chinamans Bluff No. 5.



The ridge to the Tonalli River was good but steepish at the end. We made our landfall well enough but spent some time in verifying our position so that we would not have to lug our packs up to a bluff that would not go. The Tonalli River is a lovely clear stream that runs over many coloured polished stones. The river has steep banks but there are many places where a cosy camp could be made. The sun was shining directly into the river while we were there and this made such a sparkling scene that it is with me even now.

We picked the right route and at 11.15 a.m. were sitting on top of the fifth Chinaman, somewhat staggered by the tremendous views of Yerranderie Peak and Byrne's Gap and the area around South Peak. The next two hours were a scrub bash of the worst kind through prickly, spiky, interlaced bushes generously decorated with fallen sally, most of the scrub being about eight feet high. It was a very welcome break for lunch on Bull Island Gap. Overcoming the normal lunch-time indolence we headed straight down into Bull Island Creek and in no time at all found ourselves dashing down the bed of one of the clearest, easiest creeks one could wish for. When we reached the junction of Green Wattle Creek at 3.00 p.m. the grove of bluegums and a pleasant grassy flat decided for us that this was our campsite. It was not to be resisted despite the early hour. It is not every year that one has the chance to camp on Green Wattle Creek where the feeling of remoteness from the busy world of men is satisfied to the fullest. Happy indeed were the camp chores and the cooking and eating this night. Then lolling back on the soft green bank we yarned away the hours with the waving tops of the slender bluegums far above us and beyond them the frosty stars. and then the contentment of lying in the sleeping bag and thinking back over the twelve months wait for a holiday walk that was being graced with weather exceeding all one's hopes.

WEDNESDAY, 11th September and were away from camp at 7.50 a.m. We took the easy ridge below our campsite up onto the Broken Rock Range and the big gap between Toddy Head and the Broken Rock. As we went up the splendid views began to unfold to

Yerranderie Post Office

the east, south and west, while from the gap itself, very broad and flat and fairly open there were far ranging views northwards where, alas, storm clouds were beginning to gather. The walking and the scenery in this area is excellent and although it is the most remote of the Blue Mountains, it is well worth the effort of getting into it. With the deserted town of Yerranderie for a base there are infinite possibilities for walks in the surrounding area.

From the gap we proceeded westerly taking great care over navigation to pick the right ridge to Butcher's Creek. We managed our landfall again and spent some time near the Grog Shop in the Black Hollow, taking some rich nourishment; biscuits coated with butter and honey and washed down with well sweetened milk. Butchers' Creek has cliffs or otherwise steep sides, hence the name Black Hollow; has many bends, the usual stony bed and is very scarce on camp sites. We congratulated ourselves on having camped in Green Wattle rather than pushing on to Black Hollow.

The ridge out of Black Hollow was another stony arete, but once on top we were rewarded with a glorious look back to Bull Island Peak and the surrounding walls. A short walk along a nice ridge brought us out onto Scott's Main Range just as a fine chilly rain began to fall. The rain cleared in a few minutes and we walked along in sunshine. The old bush road along Scott's Main, which was so delightful with its windings and sunlight and shadows and trees meeting overhead, is no more. There is a broad highway, enough to march a battalion up and down. All is spoilt and the beauty of the walk along Scott's (apart from one section between Bran Jan and Kowmung House), gone forever. We made another early camp this day . . . at 2.15 p.m. among the Ironbarks near Kowmung House.

THURSDAY, 12th September, and we started off at 9.00 a.m. for some sightseeing of the dam before turning back along the old Cedar Road to the Kowmung. There is a delightful spot on the walk about half way to

Bran Jan where we could see, on the ridges leading into Butcher's Creek (a whole mass of blooming wattle and beyond the creek the ramparts of Broken Rock Creek, then further the Broken Rock Gap, the yellow walls of Green Wattle Creek. To the right there is the great double cliff line of Ti-Willa on the descent to the Kowmung.

We had joined up with two other walkers on Wednesday afternoon and at their suggestion we agreed to camp on the Kowmung on Thursday night, but after a feat of gastronomy that lasted from twelve noon until three, it was suggested that we get a little of the climbing behind us and camp in a green and pleasant spot of which we knew about ninety minutes along Gingra. Every walk must have its share of suffering. Ours was about to descend on us. We had been toiling up Gingra for an hour when there was wind and rain and general misbehaviour, so much discomfort that it was impossible to get up a tent, and we decided to push on to the Walls. We reached the Walls at 10.15 p.m. almost stiff with cold, sleet, snow, ice, wind and rain and any other inclemency of weather I may have overlooked. Our hands were swollen and aching, we were tired from the trying time up Gingra in the dark and then walking bent double against the wind blasting across the exposed Kanangra Plateau.

At Whalan's Hut, in the morning we looked out at snow drifted against the logs, the green trees and the clear cold blue of the sky. We cracked ice in the creek for water, then looked for firewood in the crisp morning. The hard work was over. A lengthy breakfast, long trousers and woollen gloves and we drove down to the Walls for the last lingering look across to the Colong Maze and the Blue Breaks dominated by the massiveness of Mt. Colong. Already our minds were jumping forward to next year.

The Kowmung River.

The Importance of Being Naive

By John Pettigrew—Kamerukas

Splashing and shouting echoed around the canyon walls. It was getting darker and chillier as the canyon steadily deepened.

"Just wait until we get to where the bottom drops out of her," remarked Barry. He had entered, and christened, the canyon "Claustral" on a previous trip via another tributary canyon.

"The sky is just a tiny slit high above you and . . . Hey. Come and have a look at this snake."

Lying on a log near the chilly water's edge was a small snake with a bright yellow, criss-cross pattern on its otherwise dark back. It lay in shade, apparently disdainful of the sunlight and sand a few feet away as eight walkers stood gazing in a circle of respectful radius with the snake at the centre. The ninth member, otherwise known as Presumptuous, stepped boldly forward and collared the snake behind its neck.

"You beaut. A diamond snake. Harmless. Take a picture of him, Dave." The others cautiously gathered as the picture was taken. Quietly, obviously respectful of Presumptuous' superior reptile knowledge, one member suggested that diamond snakes climb trees. What a terrific photo.

Presumptuous bade the snake climb a tree.

The snake refused.

Presumptuous persisted.

The snake bit Presumptuous.

The snake was dropped and the crowd gathered to confirm what they had read in all the books. One quoted verbatim, like Clancy's friend, "Non poisonous snakes leave, in contrast to the double puncture of venomous ones, a semi-circle of teeth marks." They saw a finger tip adorned with two slowly swelling drops of blood.

"Listen. You had better put a tourniquet on that and lance it."

Presumptuous scoffed. He knew his snake business. Diamond snakes are harmless; that is that. So they set off downstream in a joking mood with Presumptuous sucking his finger.

"Ha ha. Suppose it was a rare deadly snake; a poisonous species unknown to the great world of science."

"Ha, ha. Indeed." P. joined in the joking.

However P. soon found his conversation flagging, as full concentration was required to place feet squarely on the boulders of the creek bed which seemed to be joining in the swimming act too. What was more, P. was developing a headache which grew in intensity at each step. P's head was bursting in fact. P. noticed

considerable haematomae (i.e. bruising, P. knew his medical business as well as his snake business) around the puncture marks and that this was spreading to the back of his hand. P. felt nauseous and communicated his feelings of ill-being to his companions (by now a little anxious themselves, about their friend's constricted pupils and greenish complexion).

The unavoidable swims in the canyon afforded temporary relief with their coolness, but the tremendous compression inside P's skull was even worse on emerging. At the waterfall the placing of ropes was tedious and P. rested, finding to his relief that the headache and nausea lessened, although his hand was now swollen and black. An expansion bolt was required as a belay for the last abseil in the very narrow smooth canyon, sometimes as narrow as six feet, and the party retreated, entering the canyon from below, via Thunder Canyon, and examined the last fall, where the bolt was needed, which was about sixty feet. They vowed, in the familiar phrase, to return.

Back in civilisation, Kinghorn, The Snake Man was consulted, and was told about a certain broad-headed snake. The words of wisdom from the Snake Man were communicated to Presumptuous, now fully recovered. P. was sceptical. After all he knew his snake business too. On the off chance that on this occasion he was slightly in error in his identification of a Diamond snake he consulted a text book. He read, with increasing awe, "Broad Headed Snake (Hoplocephalus bungaroides.) Remarkably similar to a small diamond python but easily distinguished by its broad head and ventral scales . . . shuns the light. Hence rarely seen, except at night (P. thought perchance it might like dark claustral canyons). Highly venomous, out of all proportion to its size. Has very large venom sacs inside small head etc . . ."

Another report said that of two known bites, one was fatal. The other person bitten was Eric Worrel. No more need be said—except that Presumptuous desperately tried to mend his know-it-all ways, most importantly by writing this account of his experience to be a warning to all would-be snake charmers with inadequate knowledge of the subject in hand.

However you may still see him in the scrub, abseiling from a tiny sapling ("Gosh, I only weigh ten stone and this tree would hold tons"), or striking off the wrong side of a watershed to spend a whole weekend in the wrong canyon-creek. ("Heck this map is out to hell. Not one bend or side creek seems to be right.")

HISTORICAL NOTES

(Bushwalkers have shown a continuing interest in the history and exploration of our walking areas. Many valuable maps have been compiled by Federation members in past years and the co-operation of Federation has been enlisted by the Dept. of Lands to verify and supply names to features shown on aerial maps.

Traditionally the 1813 crossing has been taken as the major breakthrough of a young colony in search of land. Published here are two articles by member historians; one questioning the need for the 1813 crossing, the other giving light to a neglected and overshadowed explorer.—Editor.)

ICONOCLASM AND THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

By Hal Richards—C.M.W.

Before one can fully grasp the motivations of early exploration it is imperative to understand the economy and social structure of the colony at the time. For the ten years after the establishment of the penal colony in 1788 the main problem was that of subsistence. Due to lack of experience in the new harsh environment, natural depredations such as floods and droughts and the unwilling and inexperienced convict labour, the wheat crops were virtual failures for several years. For various reasons the convict shepherds contrived to lose the colony's livestock. These early years were fraught with difficulty.

The military guard was more a hindrance than a help, and the motley N.S.W. Corps, after 1792, was little better. Due to harvest failures in the first two years rations were halved for all. The arrival of the Second Fleet in 1790 further depressed the already emaciated economy; starvation was a very close acquaintance.

Again in 1790-1 the wheat crop was a failure and tragedy was only averted by fresh supplies from India and the Cape Colony in early 1792. By the time of Phillip's departure in 1792 full rations had been restored. It is important to note the term "rations", and to realise the fact that N.S.W. was dependent on supplies from the commissiarat store. In 1800 over half the population drew stores from the commissiary; in 1817 only one third did so.

I have set down these details to show that the economy was by no means bursting its bounds by 1813, or even much later. There was no desperate land shortage as so many writers would have one believe. True, much of the land in the Cumberland Plain was used by such men as John and Gregory Blaxland, John Macarthur, the Rev. Samuel Marsden, Sir John Jamison, Darcy and W. C. Wentworth, Simeon Lord and Andrew Thompson; but there were still considerable areas available for those who would clear it. When Governor Macquarie took office in 1810 only land within 50 miles of Sydney Cove was known. What we should be concerned with in the discipline of history are movements which are of direct or indirect economic importance. By this standard the attempts of Barralier and Caley, before 1813, to cross the Blue Mountains are of aesthetic and not historical importance. It is worthwhile, however, to link these abortive efforts to the process of economic growth which is the centre of history.

In 1794 farming was commenced on the Hawkesbury River flats near the confluence of South Creek with the Hawesbury. A little later, a similar small scale wheat and maize culture was established on the George's River Flats. Agriculture was also being carried on at Hunter's Hill, Dundas Valley and Toongabbie. All the cultivation was primitive—subsistence was the prime object—no tools apart from hoes and spades existed. The first plough did not arrive until 1798. By 1804 it was obvious that these alluvial flats, while rich, were insufficient and too unreliable, due to frequent floods, to serve as a basis for an agrarian economy which was the pattern Imperial policy sought to impose until 1820. Due to this recurrent flooding agriculturists were forced to use areas away from the flood plains. This meant clearing of the uplands — something which had been avoided due to lack of labour. Inevitably this led to competition between graziers of sheep and cattle and farmers for the cultivatable land. This competition did not really become intense until the 1820 land boom.

The traditional theory of the mountains as a barrier to expansion is denied by the following facts:

(1) By 1819 only eight graziers had taken herds over the mountains, and by 1821 only 23% of the colony's sheep and 9% of its cattle were in the Bathurst area.

(2) In 1818 the first emancipist farmer to be allocated land across the mountain had only 350 acres under crops. By 1821 less than 1% of the colony's population were west of the Nepean.

This lack of use may be ascribed to official refusal to release the new land, lack of capital and labour (most convicts were assigned to farmers and graziers on the Cumberland Plain) and the high cost of transport to the only source of demand, the commissiary at Sydney Cove.

That the 1813 crossing was not of prime importance even at that time is shown by a salient passage in the Sydney Gazette, 12th June, 1813 . . . "(the new lands) time may render of importance and utility".

What then is the real importance of the 1813 access from an economic point of view? If the land shortage was not a valid reason for the crossing the reason may be found in the direction of the economic growth of the colony from small farming methods to large scale pastoral occupation of the land. The expansion in this direction was the work of the relatively few large scale settlers who had control over much of the better grazing land in the Cumberland Plain. By 1810 even this better grazing land was deteriorating due to overstocking and the failure of the oat-grass to regenerate when eaten out. This deterioration was compounded further by drought in 1811 and a plague of grasshoppers in 1810. Thus there was a need for new pasture land, but it was felt only by a few large pastoralists. This caused some of their numbers to do a little bushwalking, but being decadent "white ants" they used horses to find new cheap pastoral lands with good grass and no "army worms".

These exertions culminated in the now famed 1813 effort. Lawson went along as navigator, but Blaxland and Wentworth both had pasture in mind. Similar pressure led Charles Throsby to penetrate new country to the south-west of the Bargo brush, thence down the Macquarie Pass to the Illawarra region in 1815. In 1818 the Wingecarribee had been crossed and the Goulburn Plains discovered though they were not used until 1820. Bell had found a practical route from Windsor to the Vale of Clwydd near Lithgow in 1823, hence Bell's Line Road.

The use of the new lands to the west was hampered by personal animosity between Blaxland, Macarthur and Macquarie, lack of official instructions regarding the new land and the stark fact that the colony was still a penal station. To "honour" this prime aim of the colony it could not be dispersed and still remain effective. By 1815 further droughts reduced stock numbers to the extent that many pastoralists could not supply contracts to the commissiary, and drought in 1820 forced Macquarie to permit occupation by lease of the south-west areas. Stock could be driven back from the Goulburn Plains in good condition whereas they could not be driven over the harsh Blue Mountain route and be of economic importance when they arrived at Sydney.

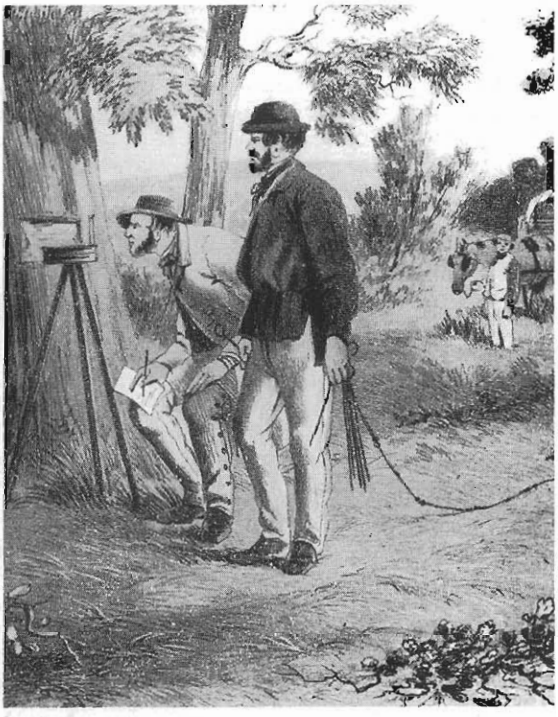
From research in this part of Australian history I have come to the conclusion that the crossing of the Blue Mountains has received unwarranted importance from most writers. Of much greater importance was the extension of grazing, on a lease system, to the area between Bargo and Cookbindeen in November, 1820, and thence to the Goulburn Plains in December, 1820. The Blue Mountains crossing is largely of romantic interest—they had been a challenge, but not an economic impediment whose subjugation would mean economic advance.

THE JOURNEYS OF GEORGE CALEY

By Tom Hailstone

Recent publicity has drawn attention to this early Botanist and Explorer, who deserves to be better known. Born at Craven, Yorkshire, in 1770, Caley at an early age secured the patronage of Sir Joseph Banks, and arrived at Sydney in the "Speedy" on 15th April, 1800. Among his fellow passengers were Lieut. Governor King and Ensign Barrallier. He was assigned by King to Parramatta, then known as Rose Hill, where he established a botanical garden and wasted no time in collecting specimens for transmission to his illustrious patron. However, it is as an explorer that we write of him now.

In 1801 he made two trips to the Nepean via Prospect Hill and later a survey of Bass Strait and Western Port with Lieut. Grant and Barrallier. In 1802 he travelled to Camden, and from Mt. Hunter gained his first glimpse of the southern extension of the Blue Mountains, then known as the Carmarthen Hills. On this occasion he came upon the Nepean near Maldon and continued on to the largest of the Picton Lakes. In 1803 he made a voyage to Newcastle and in the following year, in an attempt to locate the wild cattle in the Cow-



pastures area around Camden and Douglas Park, met the aboriginal mountain chieftain Cannabygal, who had a reputation for cannabalism among the natives of the plains.

Finally, after several short trips into the mountains, of which unfortunately no record remains, he departed on a full scale attempt at a crossing, accompanied by four of the hardiest men in the colony. On the 3rd November, 1804, they took a boat up the Hawkesbury, landed near the junction of the Grose and knowing by experience the rough nature of the lower reaches of this river, struck up into the heights in the direction of Mt. Bowen, crossing the head of Little Wheeny Creek near what is now Kurrajong. Here, a view of the distant mountains gave some intimation of the rugged terrain to be crossed and leaving the ridge, Caley descended into the valley of Burralow Creek. Continuing westward he crossed three valleys south of the Kurrajong-Bilpin Road before coming to the larger valley of Hungerford's Creek, where ropes were used to lower the baggage. Caley followed the creek down to its junction with the Grose, where the extreme roughness of the country led him to name it Devil's Wilderness.

Striking upwards again, he ascended the steep ridge dividing the Grose and Hungerford's Creek and continued north west to "Fern Tree Hill" now known as Mt. Tomah. Here an uncomfortable night was spent in mist and rain, which lifted late next day to reveal "a dreadful chasm" between the party and Mt. Banks. It was found necessary to skirt the valley and proceed to "Table Hill" (Mt. Bell) from which the party, by heading the several valleys separating them from Mt. Banks, arrived at the latter after ten days travel from Richmond Hill. Camping for the night in a cave, Caley next day ascended Mt. Banks, so named in honour of his patron, and looking east saw "a wide and extensive vale . . . and the land on the sea-coast a little hazy", but to the west the prospect was enough to daunt the hardiest and he wrote in his journal, speaking of the valleys, "I am too well convinced now of their rugged and impassable state". Supplies were running low and he decided to return, not knowing that only eight miles further west lay the Darling Causeway overlooking the valleys of the Cox's and Lett Rivers. His failure was a glorious one—he had chosen

the hardest route over the Mountains, harder even than Barrallier's to the Kowmung, and it was not until 1823 that the passage was made by Archibald Bell Jnr., and then only after a previous failure.

Undaunted by this experience Caley did a trip in January, 1805, to the Georges River from Prospect, tracing part of its course near Ingleburn and, shortly after, one from Parramatta "to the sea" at Narrabeen via St. Ives, Gordon, Eastwood and Carlingford. In 1806 he was commissioned by Governor King "to go the journey which Mr. Barrallier has been as he (King) doubts the accuracy." This was to Barrallier's depot at Nattai, thence to Kowmung and Christy's Creek, the whole trip being accomplished, using Barrallier's map, in twenty-eight days. Other explorations include the present site of Appin and the Appin Falls, a trip to Mulgoa near which he noted the Nepean took a turn to the west and apparently plunged back into the Mountains at Norton's Basin.

Caley did not visit the peak which bears his name on the northern side of the Grose opposite Mt. Hay, and by the irony of fate nearly all the places he named on his explorations have been changed, though considering their somewhat bizarre nature, this is not entirely surprising. The substitution of Mt. King George for Mt. Banks was hardly justified, but Cow Pastures for Vaccary Forest, Kowmung for Dryander, Picton Lakes for Scirpus Mere, Stonequarry Creek for Poppy Brook and Mt. Hunter Rivulet for Bulbinmatta Brook were only to be expected.

That Caley was a man of some temperament appears from Banks' comment to King in a letter, "had he been a gentleman he would have been shot in a duel years ago." He also fell foul of that irascible cleric Samuel Marsden, through refusal of the services of his manservant in a raid on the natives, and later because his small dog disturbed Marsden's rabbits!

Sailing for England in 1810, Caley accepted a post at St. Vincent in the West Indies where he remained for over six years. He returned owing to very bad health caused by the climate and an accident, and his short life ended on 23rd May, 1829. His remains were placed in the burial-ground of St. George's Church, Hanover Square London, beside those of Captain Flinders, but fate had one last twist in store, for when his friend Suttor visited England later, he was unable to locate the grave.

THE BLUE GUM CONSERVATION CAMPAIGN OF 1931-32

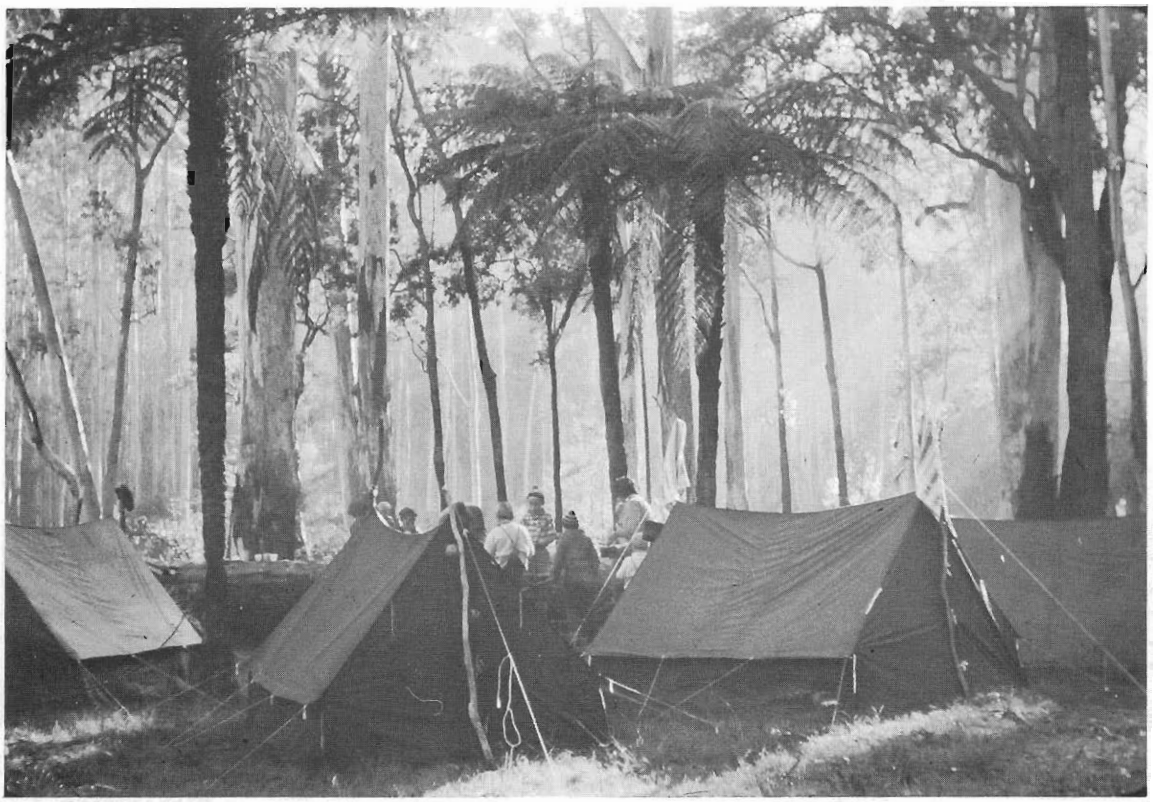
By M. J. Dunphy—M.T.C.

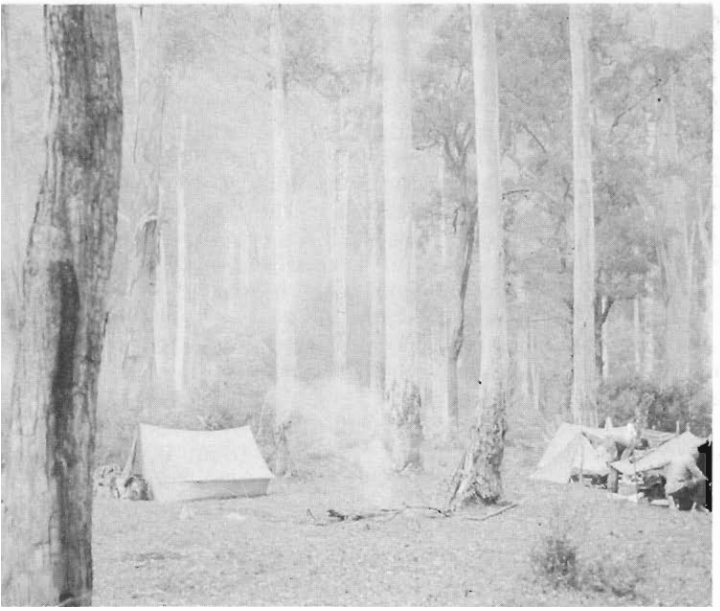
The chance arrival of an exploring, walking party at the site of the Forest, during the Easter, 1931, holidays just when ringbarking operations had commenced, marked a highly significant point in the history of scenery preservation in New South Wales. This party of several members of the old-established Mountain Trails Club and the newer Sydney Bush Walkers was led by Alan P. Rigby, an M.T.C. member with an artist's eye and an acute sense of the fitness of things. The arrival at this beautiful place coincidental with the ringbarking operations was significant because of the subsequent chain reaction of events concerning conservation. In this regard the Blue Gum Forest campaign should be coupled with the Garawarra Park campaign for a Park and reserve south of Royal National Park, as this followed immediately after the other, and was just as successful. These two campaigns marked the rise of a new parklands conservation power in the land.

These two efforts of the Sydney Bushwalkers and Mountain Trails Club, aided by the stout support of other societies and conservation minded friends, had the effect of focussing the official and public attention on scenery conservation schemes that otherwise would not have been mooted until too late. They drew attention to the fact that there existed an active organised outdoor section of the community ready and anxious to give collective and personal service and private funds, to initiate and advance schemes to save some of the natural features that make the Australian environment and scenery unique and pleasant.

On that memorable day in April, 1931, the Grose Canyon exploring party had their aesthetic feeling for fine scenery outraged; the members found it difficult to realise that action could be authorised to allow a lessee to destroy completely such a unique and glorious stand of trees, in the very centre of what usually is regarded as the major tourist scenic feature in Australia, the junction of the two great canyons of the Grose River and Govett's Leap Creek. It was unbelievable: it was the last straw!

Being intelligent people the members of the party were well aware of the continual onset





BLUE GUM FOREST

. . . indicating the important principle that the best scenery should be dedicated or reserved for public use and benefit.

THE BUSHWALKER

THE BUSHWALKER

of agricultural, industrial and commercial activities against the bushland environment of recreation, wild-life habitat and natural scenic beauty. They knew that a lot of it was reasonable and inevitable in a young country. But also they were aware that a lot of activity was one-sided, indiscriminate destruction of natural values that should be preserved for the good of the nation. They knew that, little by little, the natural character of the country, and its value as environment for rapidly increasing population, was being destroyed in the name of progress. They knew there always would be a need for some appreciable extent of bushland areas, particularly scenic areas.

Here was an instance where, surely, the authorities had made a mistake. Probably they would say they were unaware of it, but this would be hard to believe where trained staff surveyors were concerned. Was it their business always to be on the side of the primary producer? Here indiscriminate destruction was imminent in a major scenic area: action must be taken to delay it or put a stop to it. This was a classic instance where the extent of the damage to be done was appalling.

Later, at the next meeting of the Mountain Trails Club in Sydney, on 17th April, 1931, A. P. Rigby made an indignant report to members and argued that the sorry state of affairs should be halted, if it were possible to do it. Then he moved a motion that an effort should be made at once to have the lease revoked and the area reserved in the public interest. This was seconded by Mr. J. Dunphy. After discussion the motion was rescinded in favour of another which split it in two and called for more specific action, and these were carried unanimously. The general intention was clear: to try to initiate and sustain action to save the magnificent trees from the lessee's axe.

It was agreed the authorities had made such an obvious error of judgment, that the case could well be used as a starting point for action to indicate an important principle: "that the best scenery should be dedicated or reserved for public use and benefit." The first club minutes entry on this matter concludes: "It is understood the two clubs work in harmony in the matter."

The two clubs combined their efforts to discuss and explore ways and means to further the matter, but there was no combined Committee until about the middle of July. In the meantime the Hon. Secretary of M.T.C. (M. J. Dunphy) handled the necessary research work and interviews and all the correspondence between the M.T.C. and the lessee, C. A. Hungerford, of Bilpin, near Mt. Tomah and between club and authorities, and others.

The lessees stated the price required to purchase his right and title to the conditional Purchase Lease, confirmed only the previous December, and agreed to stay the ringbarking for the sum of £150, which he thought sufficient to enable him to make a fresh start elsewhere. (27th July, 1931.) This set the two clubs the difficult task of raising the amount, which was thought to be too high, anyway.

It became apparent there was need for a special committee to direct the campaign, and about the middle of July, 1931. The Blue Gum Committee was formed, primarily to investigate and further means of raising funds in a time of general stringency; without the money the campaign could not succeed. The Committee consisted of Walter Roots, Joseph Turner, Alan Rigby, Harold Chardon, Myles Dunphy, Harold Perrott, Harold Buckland and Roy Bennett. Several persons were co-opted to help the committee in various ways. Dorothy Lawry took the place of Harold Chardon when he resigned from the Committee.

The M.T.C. Secretary still continued to handle the contact correspondence.

In the meantime the lessee was becoming anxious. On 17th August, he wrote saying the price was not too high; to lose the place for £150 would be a big sacrifice. Could postpone part of payment for a time. On 16th October the committee asked what time limit he would allow. He answered, 18th October, that the offer was still open, and no further ringbarking had been done. His terms were: £50 deposit by end of November, and balance spread over 12 months.

The Hon. Secretary by interviews, ascertained that the Department of Lands was prepared to sanction the matter. This meant the deal could proceed if sufficient money could be raised within the time limit.

On 10th November the Hon. Secretary informed the lessee that a party of interested persons would like to meet him on the Blue Gum Forest site, to decide on some definite arrangement concerning terms of payment, if convenient to him. The committee and others desired to see the forest. On 12th November the lessee agreed to meet them and gave directions concerning his access track turnoff, etc.

The noteworthy meeting of the principals in the Blue Gum Forest took place on Sunday, 15th November, 1931. About twelve persons attended, including J. C. Lockley ("Redgum"),

of the "Sydney Morning Herald", and Roy Bennett, President of Wild Life Preservation Society and a member of the Blue Gum Committee. Some time was spent in looking about the sylvan paradise.

The business meeting, about midday, was held in pouring rain; the members of the party sat around in a circle in a space between the trees, each shrouded in a cape. The weather was unkind, but the great trees standing up all around appeared magnificent—except one fine specimen which lay stretched out close to the river bank, a victim of the lessee's salesmanship. No doubt it was felled to give point to the necessity for saving the trees.

At this meeting the terms were settled: £25 deposit and the balance of £105 to be paid by end of December, 1931. Total price £130.

Later the lessee wrote the Hon. Secretary and suggested means of raising the money by broadcasting and through the press.

On his own volition, greatly impressed by the quality of the forest beauty, J. C. Lockley subsequently informed the general public, through the "Sydney Morning Herald" newspaper.

Now really placed on its mettle the Blue Gum Committee set about the study of means for raising money. The Wild Life Preservation Society straight away donated £25, conveyed by Mr. Roy Bennett; it was used as the deposit needed to influence the lessee to stay his hand.

The Sydney Bush Walkers donated £10 and the Mountain Trails Club £8 to the fund.

The Committee launched a campaign of advertisement and solicited further contributions from club members and friends. Committeemen Rigby, Turner and Bennett compiled an interesting pamphlet, of which 2,000 were distributed. The firm of B. J. Ball Ltd. supplied the paper free, the block was donated by Hartland and Hyde, and John Sands Ltd. did the printing gratis. This pamphlet stated that the project was supported by W. J. Cleary Esq., late Chief Commissioner for Railways, Wild Life Preservation Society, Australian Forest League, Town Planning Association of N.S.W., the Parks and Playgrounds Assn. of N.S.W., The Geographical Society N.S.W., Langridge School of Physical Culture; E. D. Hordern, Esq., W. G. Layton, Esq., C.B.E., late Town Clerk, City of Sydney, and others. To this could have been added: The Bush Tracks Club, and the Redgum League or Tree and Flower Lovers.

However, the Committee found the going very hard; the time, towards the end of the Depression, was bad for this sort of thing: there was no money to spare. A few more contributions were received. The Blue Gum Ball and Austen Socials yielded welcome donations. Miss Dorothy Lawry, in collaboration with the Committee, compiled a booklet of walking tours, published by the Boy Scouts' Association. The royalties were to be donated to the fund.

Other avenues were explored, but it became apparent that the Club's best efforts could not produce the full amount of the balance within the time limit, although it was certain the amount could be raised eventually by Club entertainments in reasonable rotation. Finally it was realised a loan would have to be sought, a real friend of the walking and conservation movement was required, now, to assist in a practical way. The committee viewed the perspectives; one gentleman in particular was known to be a walking enthusiast, idealist and conservator. His senior business executive position indicated it was possible his financial stability would be able to stand the strain of a loan for a very good cause. Committeemen visited Mr. W. J. Cleary and explained the position. Without any ado he made the Committee a loan of £80 for a term of two years, free of interest, but on condition that anonymity be maintained.

Thus the situation was saved; the cheque for the balance of the payment was passed to the solicitors for C. A. Hungerford, grazier, of "Burando", Bilpin. In due course he signed a quittance of his rights as lessee, the Department of Lands revoked the conditional purchase lease and honoured the condition of purchase by reserving the land for public recreation. In effect the clubs and supporters bought the land at a high price and presented it to the State, but the price was not too high to save the magnificent place from destruction.

The Blue Gum Forest (Reserve 63,521 for Public Recreation) was notified on 2nd September, 1932, and the Regulations were published in Government Gazette of 2nd March, 1934.

In the meantime trustees for the reserve had been appointed: Miss Dorothy Lawry, Mr. Roy Bennett, Mr. Joseph Turner and Mr. Alan Rigby. Mr. Bennett was elected President of the Trust and was elected to the position continuously until 1961, when the trustees were asked by the Department of Lands to resign as a preliminary to the Blue Gum Forest area being absorbed into the Blue Mountains National Park. Of the trustees, Miss D. Lawry and Mr. Alan Rigby eventually resigned and Messrs. Maurice Berry and Walter Roots were appointed.

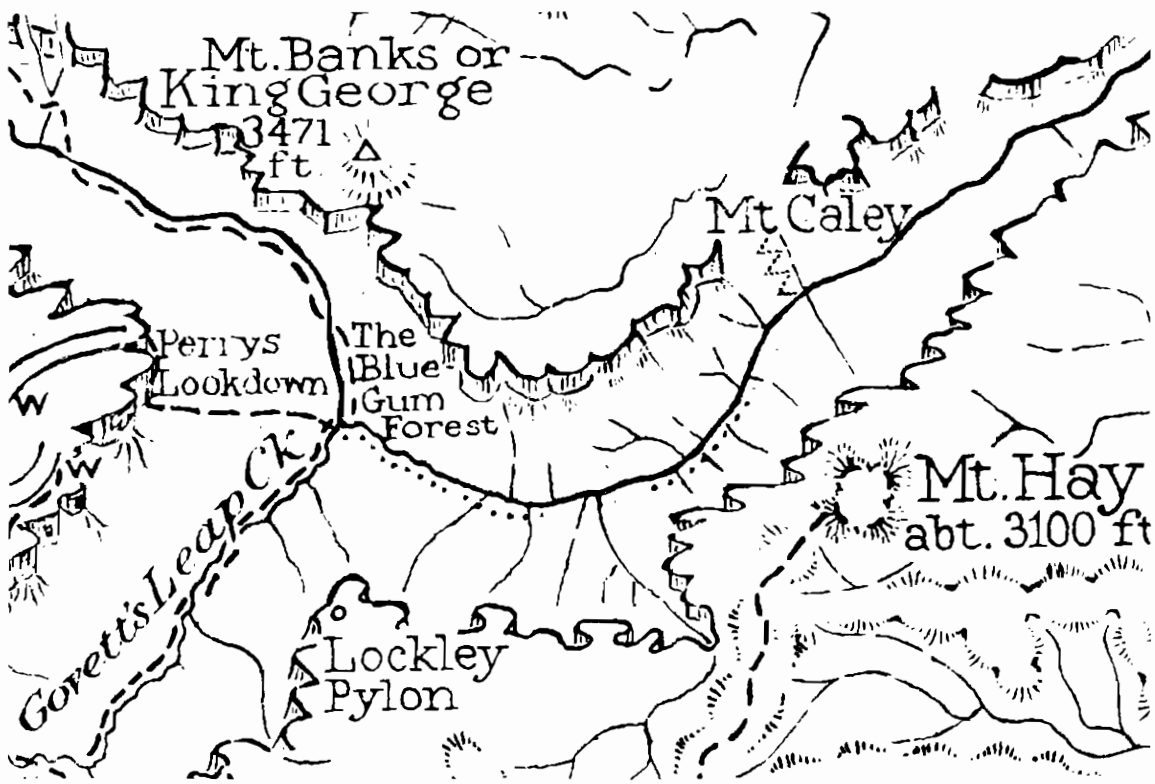
During its term of office, nearly 30 years, the trustees managed the Blue Gum Forest Reserve in a conscientious manner, despite the difficulty of access. The trustees also had other difficulties to contend with: a certain amount of inexplicable vandalism, and recurrent damage caused by flooding of the two streams that junctioned in line with the forest. Banks became undercut and large trees fell prostrate in awkward positions. The fallen trees themselves further accentuated the undercutting. Volunteer working parties of club members had to cut the logs into sections and remove them, very arduous work.

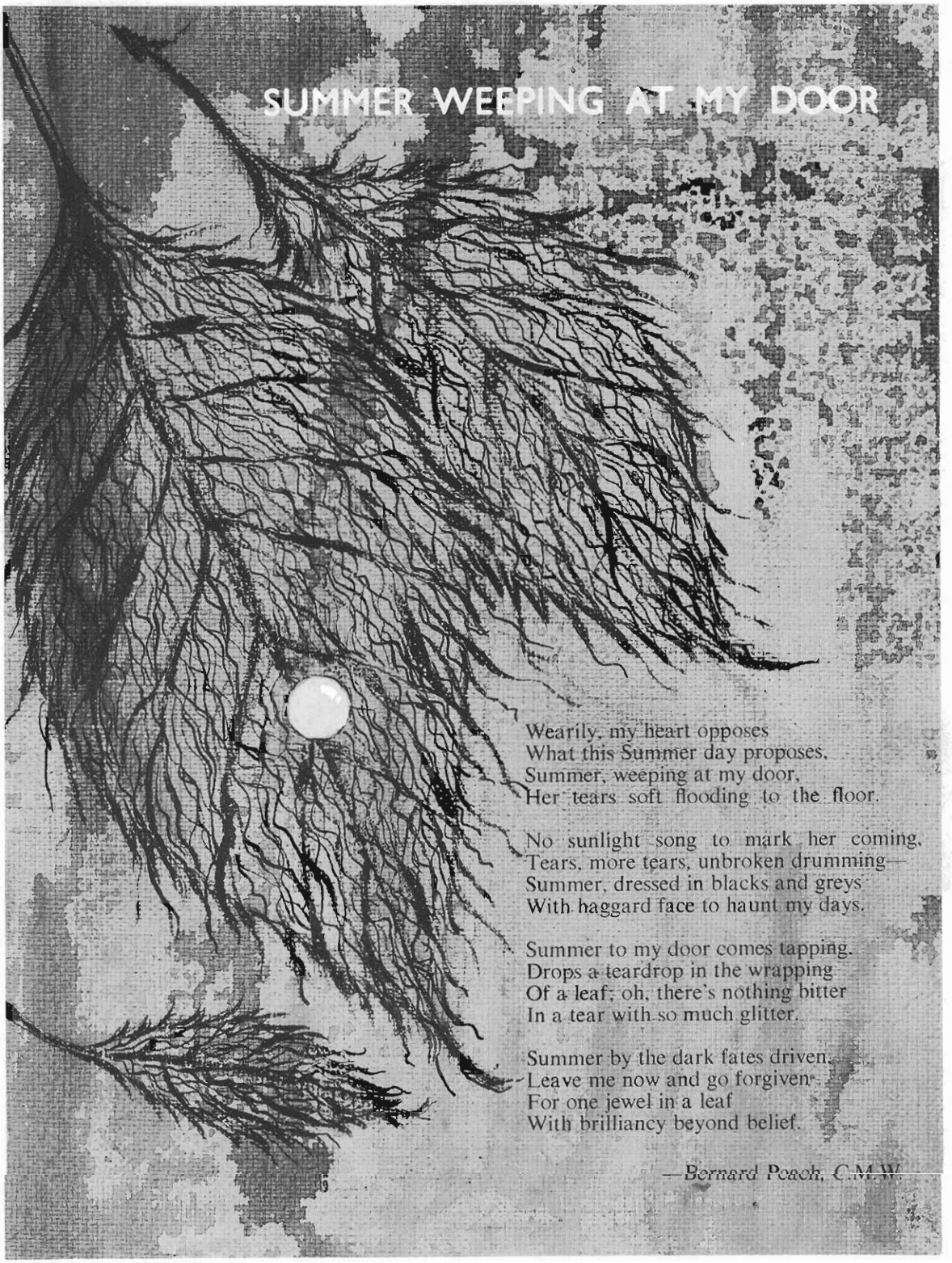
The Blue Gum Committee continued to organise money-raising functions to improve the fund. Finally, about a year later, the time arrived when the last penny was in hand, and preparations were made to repay the loan and free the Committee and clubs from debt. It was a great occasion when the Committee invited Mr. Cleary to the offices of the Millions Club, Rowe Street, Sydney, and there, on behalf of the Committeemen, most of whom were present, Mr. Roy Bennett handed Mr. W. J. Cleary the repayment cheque. He told him how much his sporting action was appreciated by everyone, and about the measure of good it had accomplished.

Then Mr. Cleary was presented with a memento of the occasion and the deed, in the form of a book of fine photographs of the Forest and locality, specially compiled, and having a hand-painted frontispiece done by artist Alan P. Rigby.

So ended a successful epic struggle to secure for the outdoors public a piece of natural paradise which any staff surveyor, in the first place and at a glance, should have recognised as being a priceless gem of bushland beauty in a unique scenic situation.

Somewhat later the Department of Lands reserved continuous strips of forested lands along Blackheath Creek, Grose River and Lower Govett's Leap Creek to protect the forest growth along the floor of the canyons. This constructive action received the approbation of Blue Mountains Shire Council, Blackheath Municipal Council, the Bushwalking Clubs, Wild Life Preservation Society, Parks and Playgrounds Movement and conservators generally. E. D. Hordern retained possession of the fine forest growth on his freehold block directly opposite Blue Gum Forest and has maintained it in its primitive condition—as he said he would in 1931.





SUMMER WEEPING AT MY DOOR

Wearily, my heart opposes
What this Summer day proposes,
Summer, weeping at my door,
Her tears soft flooding to the floor.

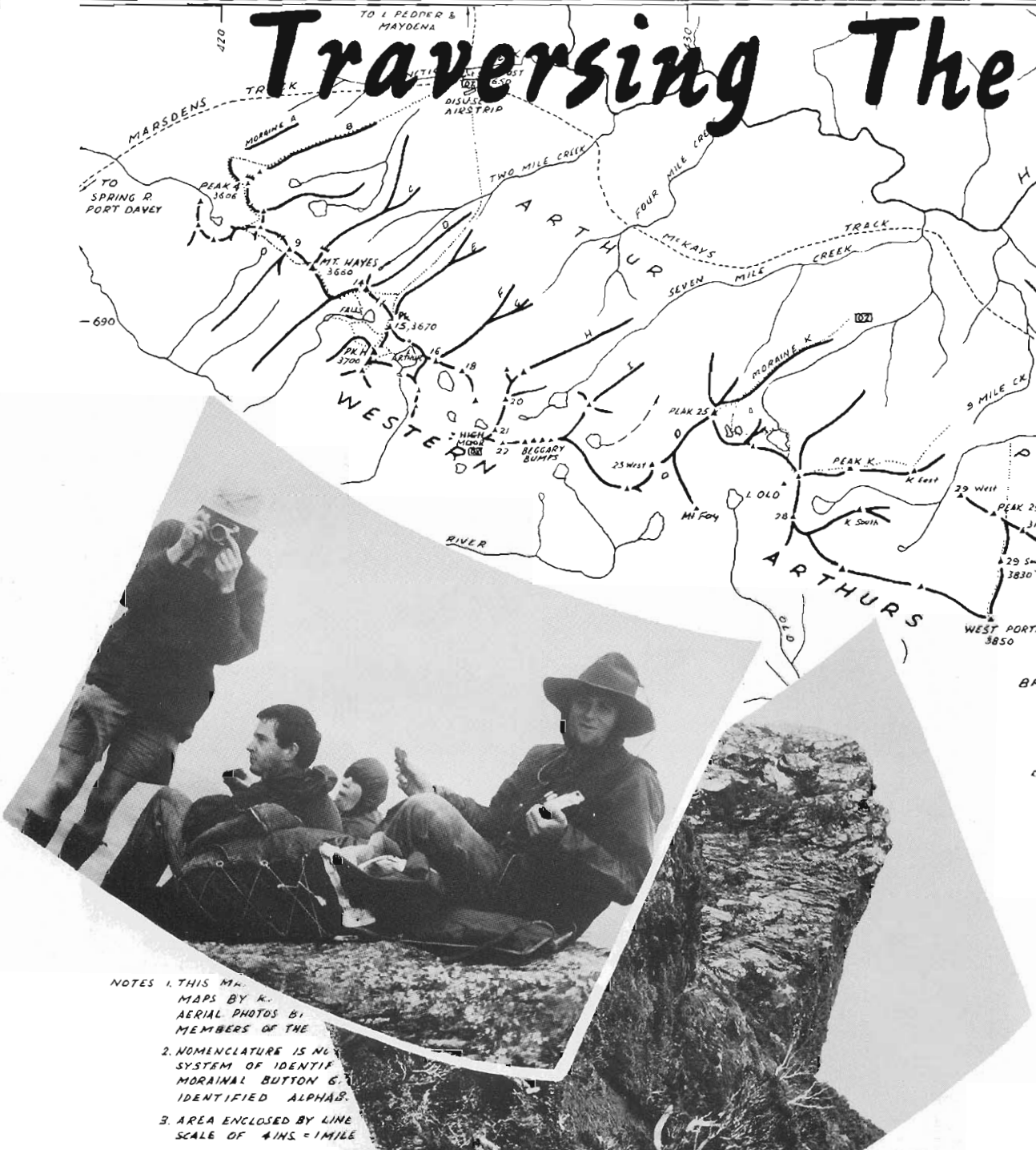
No sunlight song to mark her coming,
Tears, more tears, unbroken drumming—
Summer, dressed in blacks and greys
With haggard face to haunt my days.

Summer to my door comes tapping.
Drops a teardrop in the wrapping
Of a leaf; oh, there's nothing bitter
In a tear with so much glitter.

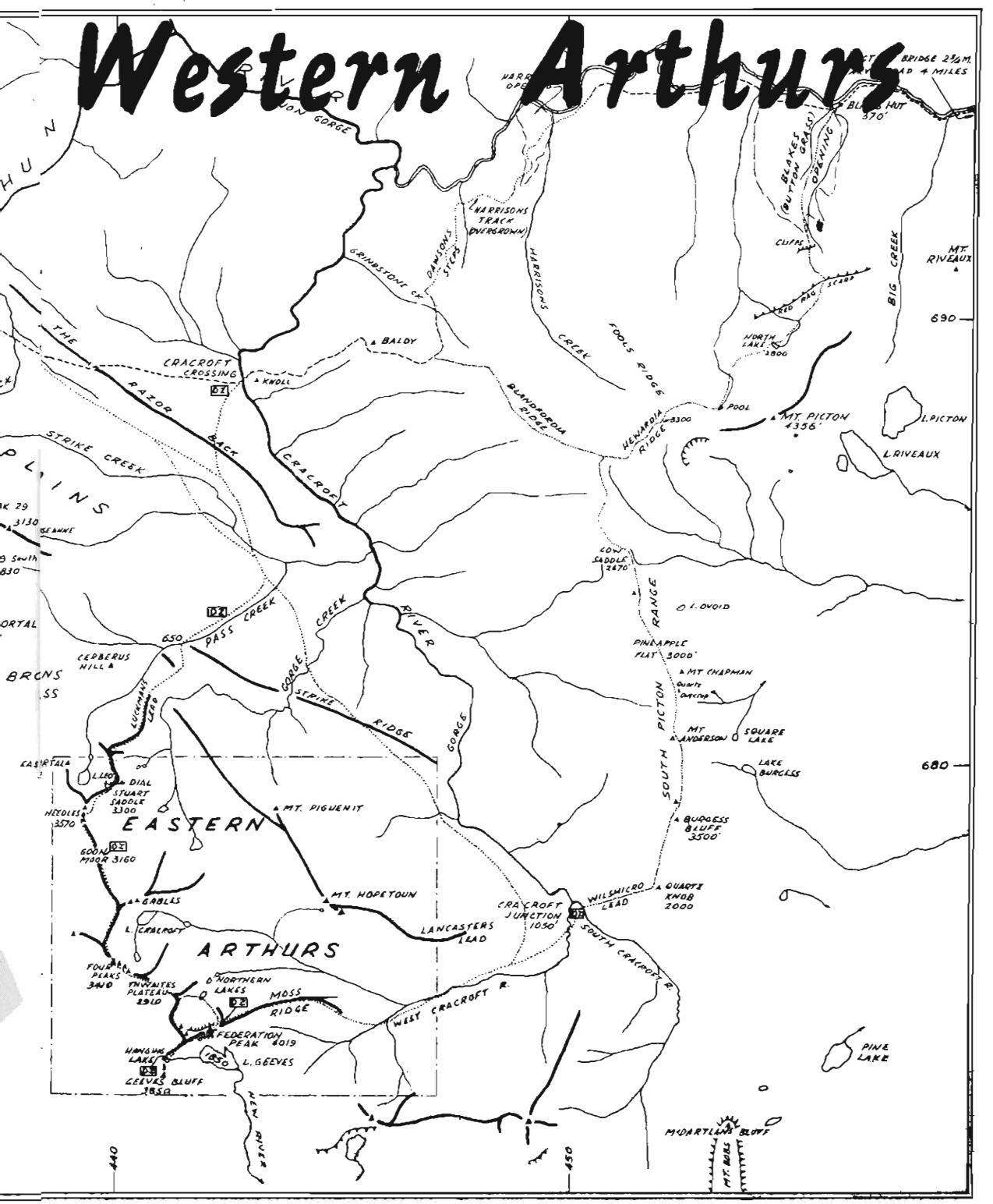
Summer by the dark fates driven,
Leave me now and go forgiven
For one jewel in a leaf
With brilliancy beyond belief.

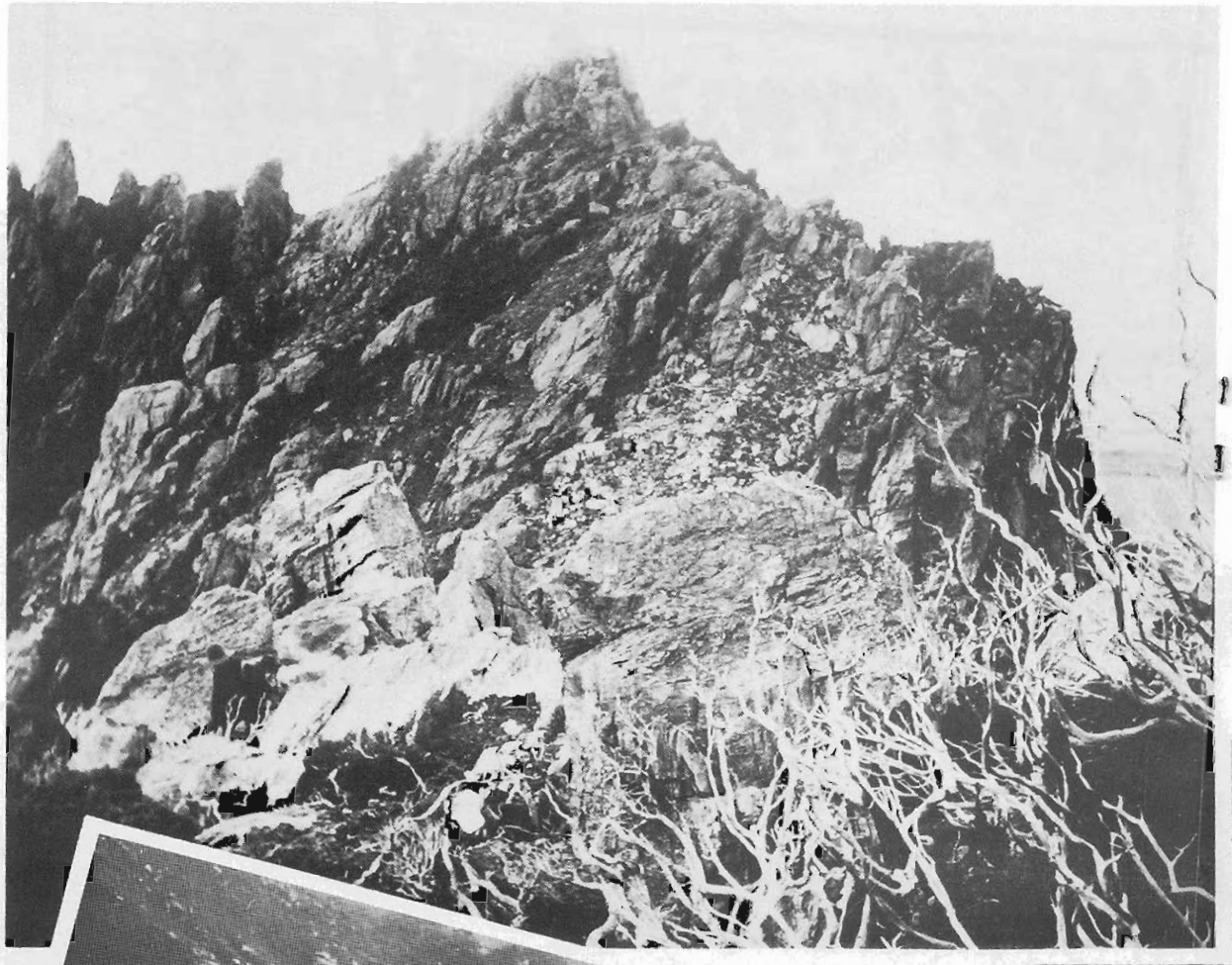
—Bernard Poach, C.M.W.

Traversing The



Western Arthurs





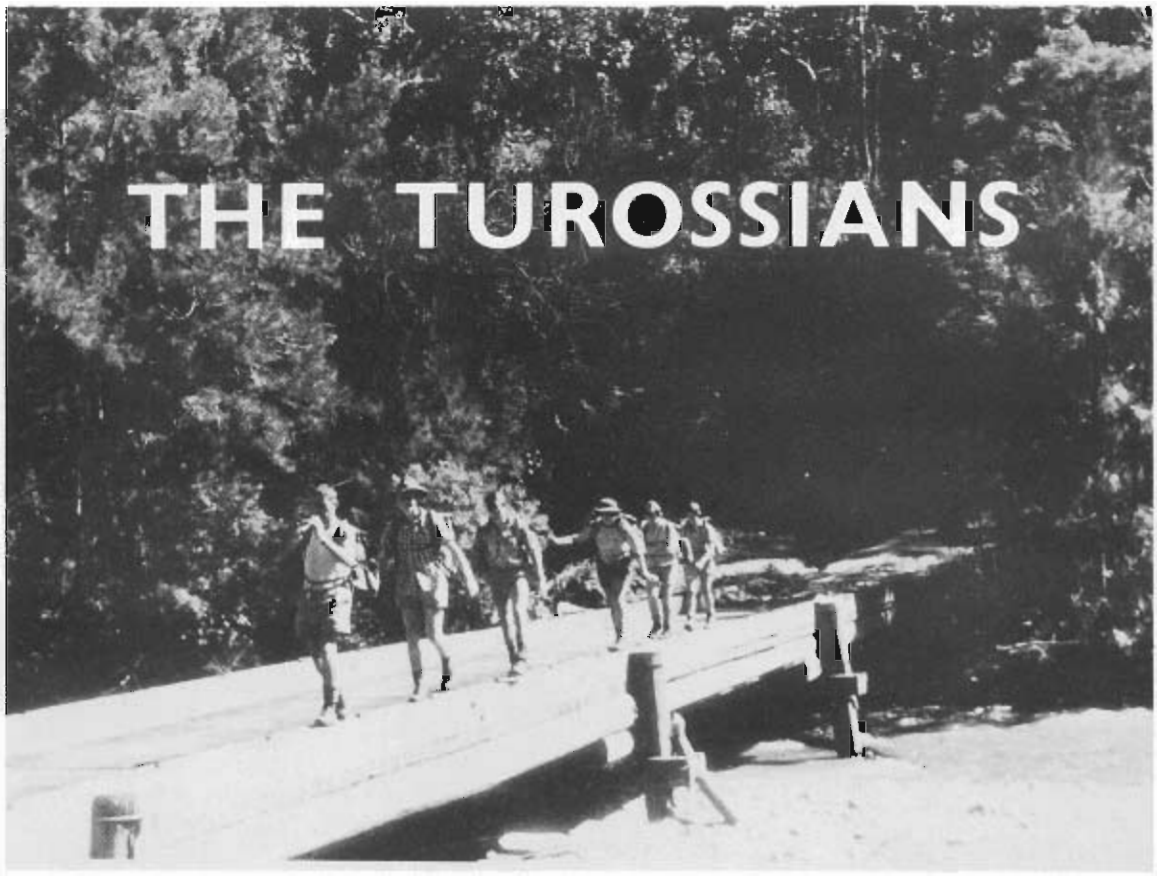
. . . somewhat disgusted with the weather, we pitched camp.

. . . the grassy slopes were really beautiful to walk on.

. . . the terrain became more interesting.

. . . the squat figure, sweating and swearing profusely, is the chronicler of this saga.

THE BUSHWALKER



THE TUROSSIANS

By C. Mills—S.U.B.W.

This is a tale of two assaults upon the Tuross River in south-eastern New South Wales, one at Easter, and one in August of 1961, made by members of Sydney Uni. Bushwalkers.

The first walk was started from Countegenay, a scattered hamlet 23 miles from Cooma. From here the map shows it as just over 30 miles of reasonable going, and so this assorted party decided that it would probably be a matter of "two, possibly three days of reasonable going to Bodalla". Upon attaining Tuross Falls this opinion was revised somewhat: "well maybe four or five", was the leader's decision, and an ignominious retreat was made, after much fun and frolics around the base of the falls.

The final decision was, however, that the falls alone were worth the trip from Sydney, as they are really colossal. The water comes pouring down from the hills, and is first pounded to foam over the huge upper cascades. Having been prepared it is funnelled through a noisy, swirling short granite canyon, at the end of which it divides into two amid prodigious clouds of spray which maintain a perpetual rainbow above the surroundings. Three hundred feet below is carved a delicately shaped peninsula, around which flows the river in a canyon which has been carved from the native granite.

On the second walk we had the same leader, one old Turossian, and five new. The starting place was again Countegenay, with a rendezvous in Cooma earlier in the day. This time we carried six days' food. We started off across the pastures of Countegenay amid pouring rain, and when we reached the river it was found to be well above its previous level. Col, our leader, believed that it would be much easier going on the right-hand bank (going towards the sea). This was based upon his careful observations of the previous walk, but we were unable to cross, as so much water was coming down, and very cold at that, that the ford was impassible.

That night we camped not far above the falls, and then, as the hour was not late,

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went down to have a look. The falls were fully as good as described, if not better at the moment, as the river was so swollen that there was a terrific volume going over them.

The country below the falls proved to be rough, completely novel, but possessing a wonderful beauty of its own. The only map of the area is practically useless. It was, I believe, made up in a terrific hurry during some believed national crisis, and was composed from parish maps and the like, and the makers of these had obviously not been into the area very much. We had known that it was only a four miles to the inch job, but we did not know that it omitted to mention any features of the land such as stream, perennial and otherwise, and did not name the mountains and prominent landmarks. About a day and a half after not being able to negotiate the ford we noted an unmarked feature on the other side of the river, this was a considerable gorge which joined with the main gorge of the Tuross If we had been there, we would probably have lost nearly a day with this; we had been lucky that the river was up.

We followed a course parallel to the river along a ridge which was marked as flat on the map, and was part of the Kybean Range, with the intention of rejoining the river at the only feature worth mentioning on the map. This was Woila Creek, pronounced "Wayley" by Nerrigundians, which later proved to be two and a half days' walk instead of the scheduled one from the falls. In the intervening twelve (map) miles a rugged but terrific walk was had.

The first day we followed the ridge up and down its switchback course, and generally revelled in the scenery, but eventually this palled and all but our vital leader found themselves concentrating on the walking alone, except when we paused for admiration. That evening we made our own clearing, and track to the creek in dense semi-rain forest. There was not enough room to pitch tents, and so, of course, it rained. Nevertheless we had a good night, with occasional sips from various medicinal bottles to combat the cold night.

Next day it was decided that the river bank could hardly be slower than the ridge and so 10 a.m. found seven of us romping down a ridge, at an angle of about 50 degrees to the river, which was one thousand five hundred feet below. The soil was loose, and we found a few patches of lawyer vines, long ago christened "wait-a-while" or "come-back-quick"; these enlivened the descent no end. At the bottom we paused to let our knees stop giggling, this unfortunately being a complaint usually contracted by downhill rompers.

The river here had emerged from the worst of the gorge proper, and had become eminently suitable for a spot of white water canoeing, except for the completely hopeless portage problem. The river from here twists, turns and coils, and the banks take it in turns to become steep and flat. The flat banks always had an angle of about 10 degrees with a gully every couple of hundred yards, if they lasted that long and the typical steep bank was 60-70 degrees, covered with wild raspberry, and loose wet earth, with rocks in it which dislodged if you tried to use them for a foothold, and were a positive joy for the last man.

Towards the end of the day we believed that we had found Woila, but this proved to be idle speculation, but we did camp soon after on a flat bit of grass, with the river at our doorstep, and heaps of driftwood nearby, where a blissful night was passed with the music of the river, our leader and his recorder, and our song(?). Also present was that inevitable campfire phenomenon, discussion. In this case the talk was of the non-manifestation of Woila Creek, and a certain unnamed young lady of the party held a seditious, typically feminine view that the aforementioned was non-existent, on the basis that the map had shown nothing and much had been found; therefore if something was found, of course there was nothing there. This was not refuted until about 11 the next morning, when a deep, fast-flowing stream was found, and a few cattle for luck; the pilgrimage was brought to a fitting end by salaaming at this miraculous creek which had deigned to show its presence at long last.

From Woila on the valley broadens, although the terrain does not change until much later. Just before lunch we decided to try and cut our distance a bit by eliminating a few bends in the river; this was done by going up instead of along, and a vantage point was gained which enabled study of the next section of the walk in detail. This proved to be breathtaking. This river, I am convinced, is one of the beauties of this country, but rather rugged and not to be undertaken unless the walker is in reasonable condition, as it cannot be done with less than a certain amount of effort. From our vantage we found that we had once again under-estimated this river, and here we were with four or five days' walking, so we believed, and not enough food for it.

Our main aim now was to make an exit before our food ran out, and we decided that probably the soldier settlement farms of Bel-

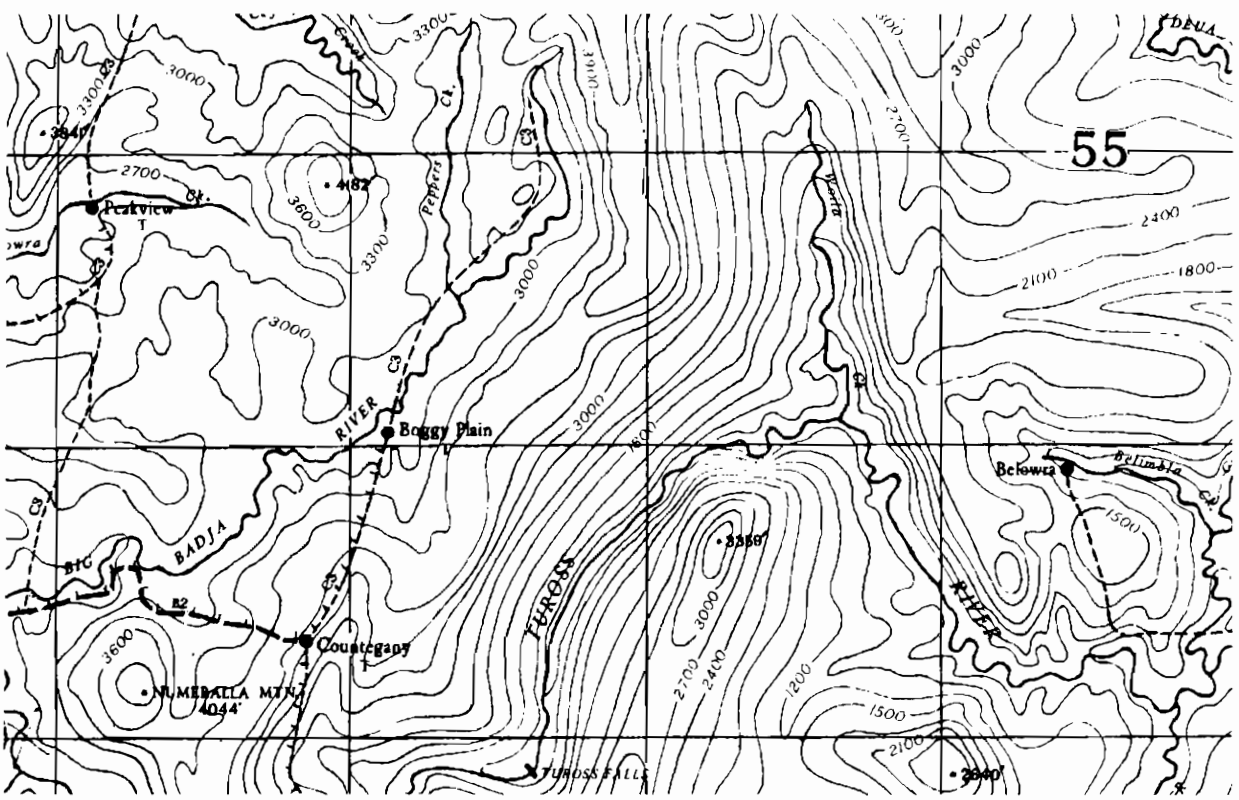
owra was our best bet, as we believed that a road ran from there to Eurobodalla, where we might possibly be able to get a lift to Bodalla. As it turned out, there was a road there, and so for once our map had been a help, although it was a bit out on where the road came from, and went to.

When the decision to leave was reached, we started after lunch to climb the ridge which we had been traversing, which led us through a myrtle forest to the top, where we looked back at the river, not far below. From here we followed an almost flat ridge, covered with sparse scrub which went to the right of the ridge we had just climbed. Along here we were rather interested to find that someone had recently been before us, as the trees had been freshly blazed, apparently made by a man on a horse. This led to a great deal of conjecture, but the question was not solved. However, the blazes were going in the same direction as us, and so we thought that perhaps they were going to Belowra, but when Belowra did eventually appear below us the blazes went off to the right and we did not see them as we made a fairly steep descent to the left down a ridge. Before going down we took advantage of the view, which consisted of two: one approximately to the west and the other approximately east, and each a full 270 degrees, if not more.

It was late in the afternoon, and a granddaddy of a storm was brewing, and away over to the south-west we could see the peaks of the Snowies, and down below, the old Tuross, looking more beautiful than ever from up here, whence we were able to follow her almost as far as Countegenay in one direction, and to Eurobodalla the other way. Our other view was of the valley on the other side of the ridge, with its various scattered homesteads. Both scenes were bathed in the lucid, unearthly light which forebodes a storm.

We set off down the steep ridge which led on the lush plains below, and on the way down the storm joined us for company and, so, if anyone had been out that day to see us they would have seen seven dirty bedraggled bods in green ground sheets galumphing down a steep slippery ridge, and all laughing insanely as some bright soul had just spotted the road on the far side of the valley.

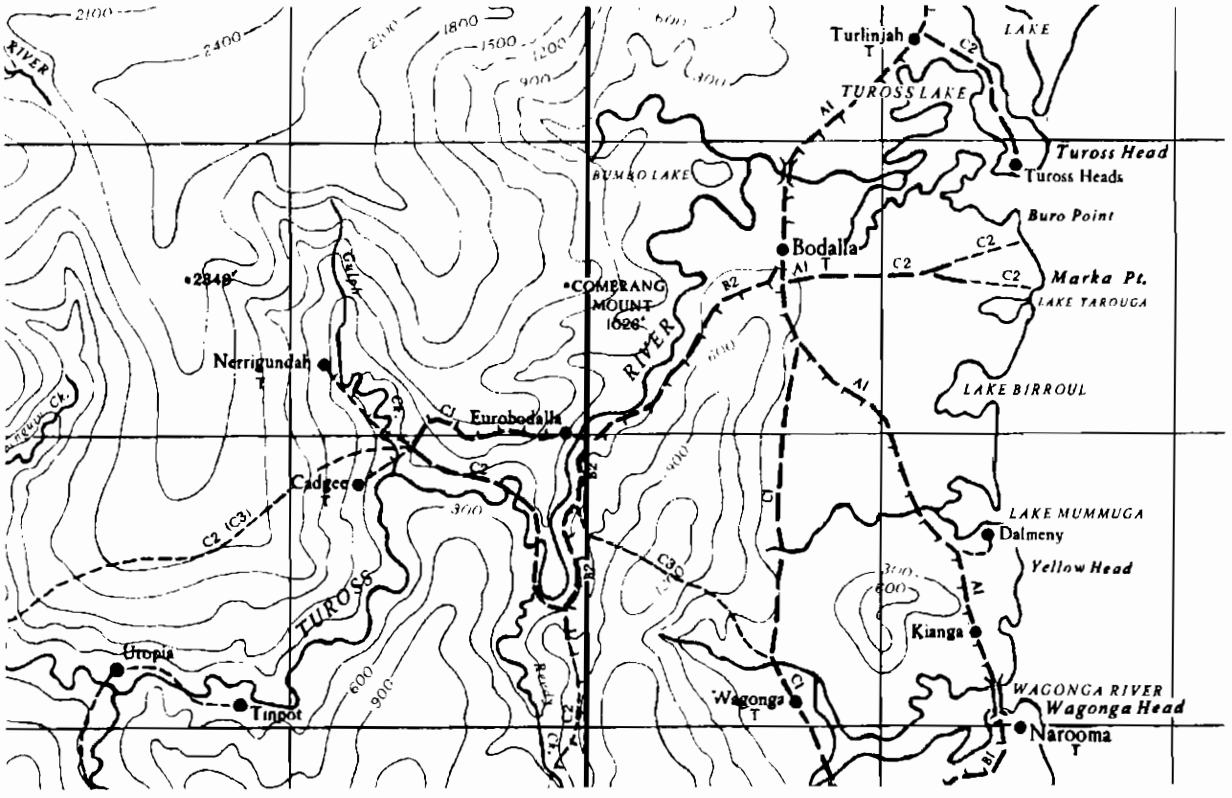
Just at the bottom the storm decided to leave us, and we chose a camp site on smooth grass.



beside a small stream, with several large dead trees nearby. Here we set about having a merry night with music and Tom Lehrer, in the person of one of the members of the party. The next day was a beauty, the first half-mile was idyllic, as we romped along through smooth green sheep pasture until the road found us. We set off along this twisting brown ribbon with Eurobodalla as the object for the day, about 16 miles on the map: perhaps even Bodalla if we could manage a lift. Famous last words for the day– "Bound to be some traffic along here today."

Now this road was a beauty for walking, but roads have a nasty habit of being easy to tire of, especially when they just keep going, without registering any sign of your progress. And so, after enjoying each mile less and less, by the time we had done about five miles, each was concentrating upon one major project: preservation of the feet. After crossing an (unmarked) tributary the road went up and we saw no more water. Each of us had filled a bottle as the creek, but come lunchtime no tannin drinker wished to give up his private supply, even for a cuppa, and so when a puddle in the road was discovered, they proceeded to avidly make their wicked brew, complete with suspended clay, so that it looked a bit like an evil medicine, whilst the non-drinkers shuddered. After lunch and a snooze we plodded on, counting the flies on the other bloke's pack, and devising ingenious means of resting our feet. Late in the day we saw the sea for the first time, with Montague Island standing out well, and just beyond again the road started to descend through a dense forest of what looked like gympie-gympie trees, which we did not examine closely, although we did spare a thought for the trouble that the road-makers must have had in cutting them back to their current well-pruned appearance.

All along the road we had seen evidence of lumber activities, and so when we spotted a sawmill among the trees we did not pay much attention to it, except to speculate the possibilities of a lift. It turned out to herald a hamlet which our worthy mapmakers had put elsewhere, and all the kids turned out to receive us, but beat a retreat when we tried to speak to them. We were quite stunned at finding this rather old, almost ghost town here, and by the time that we reached the store its keeper was out waiting for us, having been warned by a boy on an antiquated bicycle, and he then set off to rouse the rest of the audience. If Mr.



Hennessy, the storekeeper, had not been so easy going we could have easily given offence in the conversation which ensued:

Hennessy: "Good-day."

Us: "Good-day, mate. Where are we?"

Hennessy: "You're in Nerrigundah!"

Us: "Oh? Where's that?"

Here we left off trivialities, and pursued more important matters, such as fresh food.

It turned out that Nerrigundah was an old goldmining town, not quite on the banks of the Tuross, but nearby on the banks of a tributary. The gold had long since run out, with the usual few sourdoughs staying on, but with most of the more permanent population from timber, and a few very small farms which could not expand because there was no market for their products, tanbark; and a floating population of pea-pickers—aboriginal, white, and all the in-betweens. Nerrigundah claims one of the few memorials in N.S.W. to a policeman, to one John O'Grady, who captured some bush-rangers during the 1860's, and it was one of the few well-kept things in the town, and seemed to replace the usual country town war memorial obelisk in importance. It is of note too, that the public telephone here must be one of the oldest in service, as it consisted of a square wooden box with two bells on top, a twisty metal handle and an ear-trumpet shaped speaker—pay the storekeeper for the calls, a penny at a time so the notice said.

We settled for the night by the swimming hole, directed there by our amiable store-keeper so that we would not fall down a disused shaft. Here there was soft grass, fresh water, although it was a scavenge for wood, as we were last on that scene by many years. On arising in the morning we were anticipating a nice brisk walk to Bodalla to tenderise our feet completely, but instead found that for a nominal fee the mailman would take us on his trip in. As our feet had had about 16 miles of road yesterday we were not long in con-sidering. On the trip in the mailman treated us to stories of floods, farming, local lack of schooling, and just how each person we passed was related to the mailman, who also drives the school bus to Bodalla.

On arrival the walk was polished off in a most satisfactory manner: country bread, Bo-dalla cheese (really excellent), and a middy at the Bodalla Arms, which was an exceedingly charming place.

Walking for Beginners

It should go without saying that walkers who are completely new to the game should not attempt overnight camping trips straight away. The best way to work up to extended walking-camping jaunts is to start with several trips of one day duration, gradually building up in distance and severity.

Then before trying to cover two full days of walking it is wise to tackle a camping trip involving a few miles of walking each day. This allows the beginner to get the feeling of walking with the heavier pack containing full camping gear. It is quite surprising how much a full pack can throw one off balance, and it requires some adjustment of walking technique to manage it comfortably. This advance camping trip lets the beginner have the important chance to find how his gear works.

Finally, the first full walking trip should not aim to cover too many miles in the day. Thirteen or so miles of moderate going with one or two hills to climb is quite enough. If the weight of the pack is over thirty pounds for a man or twenty-five for a girl, then there is either too much gear, or it is the wrong kind and heavier than necessary. The day walk and the overnight walk to Blue Gum should be in the capacity of most active young people who have taken the trouble to prepare themselves and their equipment.

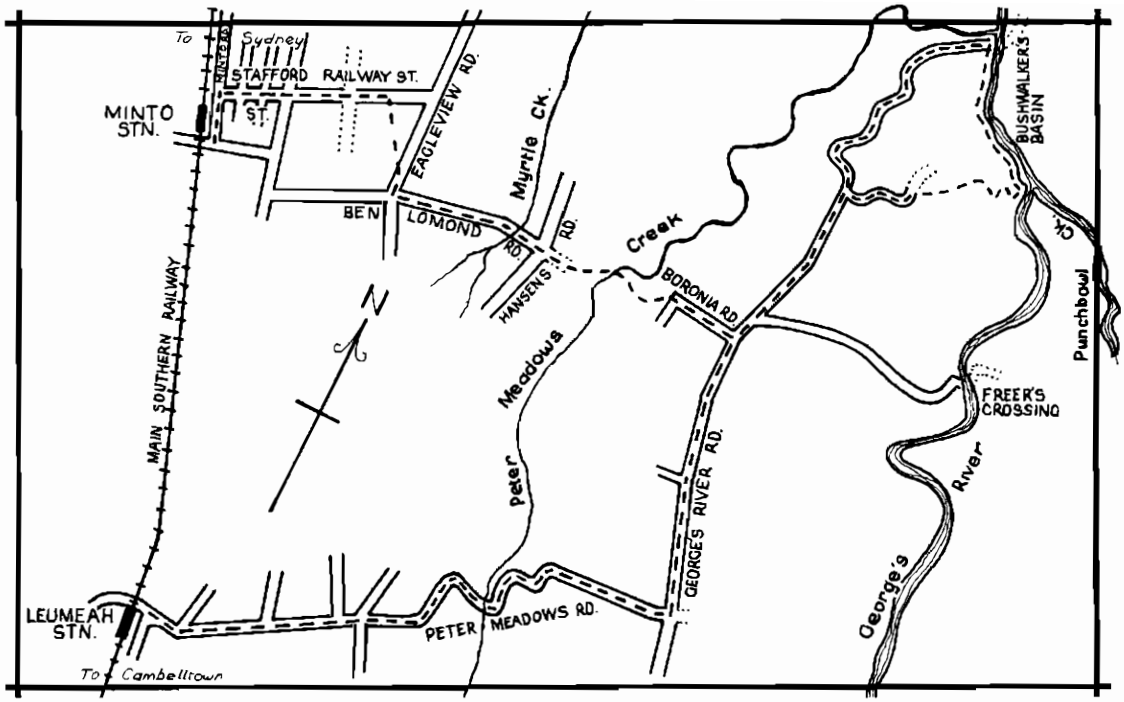
DAY WALK—
Minto — East Minto — Peter Meadows Creek — Georges River Road — Bushwalkers' Basin — Georges River and return — 11 miles.
Map: Camden Ordnance (Military) Sheet.

As this area becomes urbanised, so walkers are seen less and less exploring the pleasant spots existing along the Georges River. But homes near the railway station do not necessarily mean spoilation of the surrounding bushland. May to October is the best time for this walk. During July, Acacia discolor (Sunshine Wattle) is at its best, followed in August by Acacia decurrens (Black Wattle), together with Grevillea mucromulata (Green Spider Flower), and some of the late Banksias. This by no means completes the list. I have seen lovely Starry Clematis in Peter Meadows Creek during September. For a change from National Park and Kuringai Chase, try this walk.

An excellent train, bound for Goulburn, leaves Sydney 8.25 a.m. Sunday, due at Minto at about 9.20 a.m. Travel in the rear portion of the train as the Minto Station platform is rather short. At most other times, it is necessary to go to Liverpool by electric train and change there to rail motor or steam train to reach Minto. On Friday afternoon, Saturday, Sunday, and on public holidays, the excursion fare is about 7/6.

Upon arrival at Minto, turn left to leave the station platform and immediately left again into Minto Road. Take the first turn right into Stafford Street and continue straight ahead across several cross streets. Stafford Street becomes Railway Street as it climbs the hill past the Most Holy Trinity Church. As the hill steepens, it is possible, at present, to bear right across the paddocks avoiding fences surrounding private property, to come out in Eagleview Road on top of the ridge, near a house with a red roof, whence an excellent view over the whole district and the mountains around Burragorang Valley opens out to the West. Turn half right into Eagleview Road and follow a couple of hundred yards to Ben Lomond Road. Turn left into Ben Lomond Road, which has a bitumen surface and carries a fair amount of traffic, and follow it to a "T" shaped intersection with Hansen's Road.

Go straight ahead across Hansen's Road, ignoring a "Holiday Camp" sign, to pick up a track almost immediately, which leads sharply down to Peter Meadows Creek. The track follows the creek for a short distance, then crosses and continues down stream until it veers right and in a short steep climb, comes into the end of Boronia Road leading roughly in an easterly direction. It is not far to the intersection of Georges River Road, where a left turn is made and this road followed for about a mile north, ignoring a right turn to Freer's Crossing where a tree is growing in the middle of the intersection. After passing a house made of local stone on the eastern side of the road, the last house in the road is on the left. The road deteriorates into a bush track and, in a couple of hundred yards, divides. Take the track turning right (east), which winds downhill, widens, then continues for 100 yards or so and widens again into a small parking area used by the locals when they visit the river on hot days. The distance from the junction is about ¼ mile (5 minutes). Ignore all other two wheel tracks and look for a foot



track which will be found leading off half right and continuing first beside and then on top of a ridge to the north of the track, with the steep valley of the Georges River on either side. Keep to the track as the bush is very thick and the hillsides rocky. If the track is not clear to you where it crosses several areas of flat rock, look for scratches made by nailed boots. When Bushwalkers' Basin first comes in sight, the track appears to go straight down, but bear to the right down the hill for the best route.

A reasonable, if steep, track exists if you look for it, and leads to the spot where the entire river falls about 15 feet into Bushwalkers' Basin, at the junction of Punchbowl Creek and the main river.

The Basin is wide and deep and is not for poor swimmers. There is another good pool a short distance upstream (south). A word of warning: after heavy rain, both streams become raging torrents and should be treated with respect during or after the type of rainstorms which occur occasionally in the Sydney area. This is a good spot for lunch, although firewood is not always plentiful during summer months when visitors come more often. You may return over the same route.

For variety, the river may be followed downstream (north) after lunch for about one-third of a mile. This stretch is definitely scrubby and rocky, but if taken at a slow pace is negotiable, keeping to the left hand bank. After a particularly rocky section beside a fine, long pool, a road will be met at the point where Peter Meadows Creek runs into the main river. This is an attractive spot, especially where the rapids run out of the long pool over a series of rocks. Turn left onto the road (trafficable for four wheel drive vehicles only), and follow it up the hill, west and then south to rejoin Georges River Road where you left it at the Bushwalkers' Basin turn off, the distance being about a mile. It is now a matter of retracing your route to Boronia Road, where a sign reads "Fire Trail to Peter Meadows Creek". Follow Boronia Road (and the direction on the sign) over the creek to Ben Lomond Road, and Minto Station is about three miles.

If you would like to return by a different route to Leumeah Station, ignore the fire trail sign at Boronia Road and continue south along Georges River Road. Pass a narrow side road on the right and in about half mile turn right (west) into Peter Meadows Road. Follow west all the time ignoring side roads and, finally, down a long hill to Leumeah Station. Parts of this route are on tarred roads, unsuitable for tired feet. Should you decided to use this route, don't forget to buy railway tickets to Leumeah instead of Minto. The cost is a few pence more, but may save you having to pay excess fare on the train.

TWO DAY WALK—

Blackheath — Rodriguez Pass — Govett's Leap Creek — Blue Gum Forest — Lockley's Pylon — The Pinnacles — Flat Top Mtn. — Leura.

This trip may be commenced on Saturday morning, but if so it is wise, especially in the short winter days, to get away early. Unless a start is made from Blackheath say, before 11 a.m. on the Saturday morning the trip might have to be curtailed.

Leaving Blackheath Station on the north eastern side (where the shopping centre on the Western Highway is to be found) take the street on the left opposite the level crossing. This leads to Govett's Leap Falls and the Blackheath Lookout points (about one and a half miles from the station). Tourist signs here indicate the way to the Rodriguez Pass trail, the tourist track which traverses the valley below the lookouts. The descent is made by a series of steps cut in the cliffs and by ladders and formed tracks. On reaching the foot of the main descent the trail follows a creek downstream until it joins another larger stream flowing from right to left.

At this point Rodriguez Pass and the tourist track turn upstream. Follow the main stream, Govett's Leap Creek, downstream to reach the Blue Gum Forest. There is a reasonably good foot trail which swings left and climbs over the ridge at the creek junction, but as Govett's Leap Creek is followed downstream one or two creek crossings are usually necessary.

These crossings sometimes change after floods in the creek, but it may safely be said that if the going becomes rough and difficult and there is no evidence of a fairly well-used trail, then the track has been mislaid and is probably across the creek.

About an hour's walk downstream from the creek junction and about three to three and a half hour's walk from Blackheath the left bank of the creek develops a reasonably large flat shelf and shortly after one enters the tall forest area of Blue Gum, situated around the junction of Govett's Leap Creek and the Grose River. Camp may be made either on the near or far side of the Grose. If this area is not reached by the first night it is imperative to return the same way, as the second day's stage is much longer and involves a climb of 2,000 feet.

For the return trip it is necessary in some places to walk through bush with no distinct track to follow. The first stage is the ascent of almost 2,000 feet from Blue Gum to Lockley's Pylon, which is made by way of a ridge where a trail will be found in places, but will not be readily detected in other spots. The ridge to follow is the one which rises at the junction of Govett's Leap Creek and the Grose River on the eastern (downstream) side of Govett's Leap Creek. The direction of the ridge is almost south, and at first it rises fairly steeply from the valley. In places a foot track will be found, but this is not always obvious and it is necessary to continue through low scrubby bush. It is most important to keep right on the crown of the ridge until one is approaching the cliff faces right near the top.

On reaching the top you will probably see some places where it is possible, by doing some rock climbing, to get to a higher level. However, unless you have some climbing exeprience and can see how to get all the way to the top, it is best to stick to the recognised and easy pass through the cliffs. Veer to the left near the base of the cliffs and follow round until you find, within quite a short distance a rough stony trail leading upwards. This pass takes you up above the cliff line, but on arriving at the top you will find there is no clear track onwards. Looking to your right you will see a flat topped hill without much bush, only low heathy scrub, a short distance away. This is Lockley's Pylon, and may be reached by going along a rocky connecting ridge where you find a few faint signs of a track.

Crossing the head of a short gully you will climb on to the hillock and on the way up may notice some faint threads of a track forming on the eastern side of the ridge. It is worth going to the summit for the view over the Grose Valley, but the way then lies to the south along the ridge. Gradually a group of little paths come together to form a reasonable foot track.

About this point, looking ahead to the south you will notice a group of small peaky hills a few miles distant and beyond them a fairly large flat hill (Flat Top Mountain). This is your target, but before you get there the ridge you are following makes a slight bend to the left. If you find you are dropping into a valley and higher ground is forming on your left it is time to swing left around the head of the gully. You keep to the highest ground on the ridge until you arrive at the peaked hills (The Pinnacles).

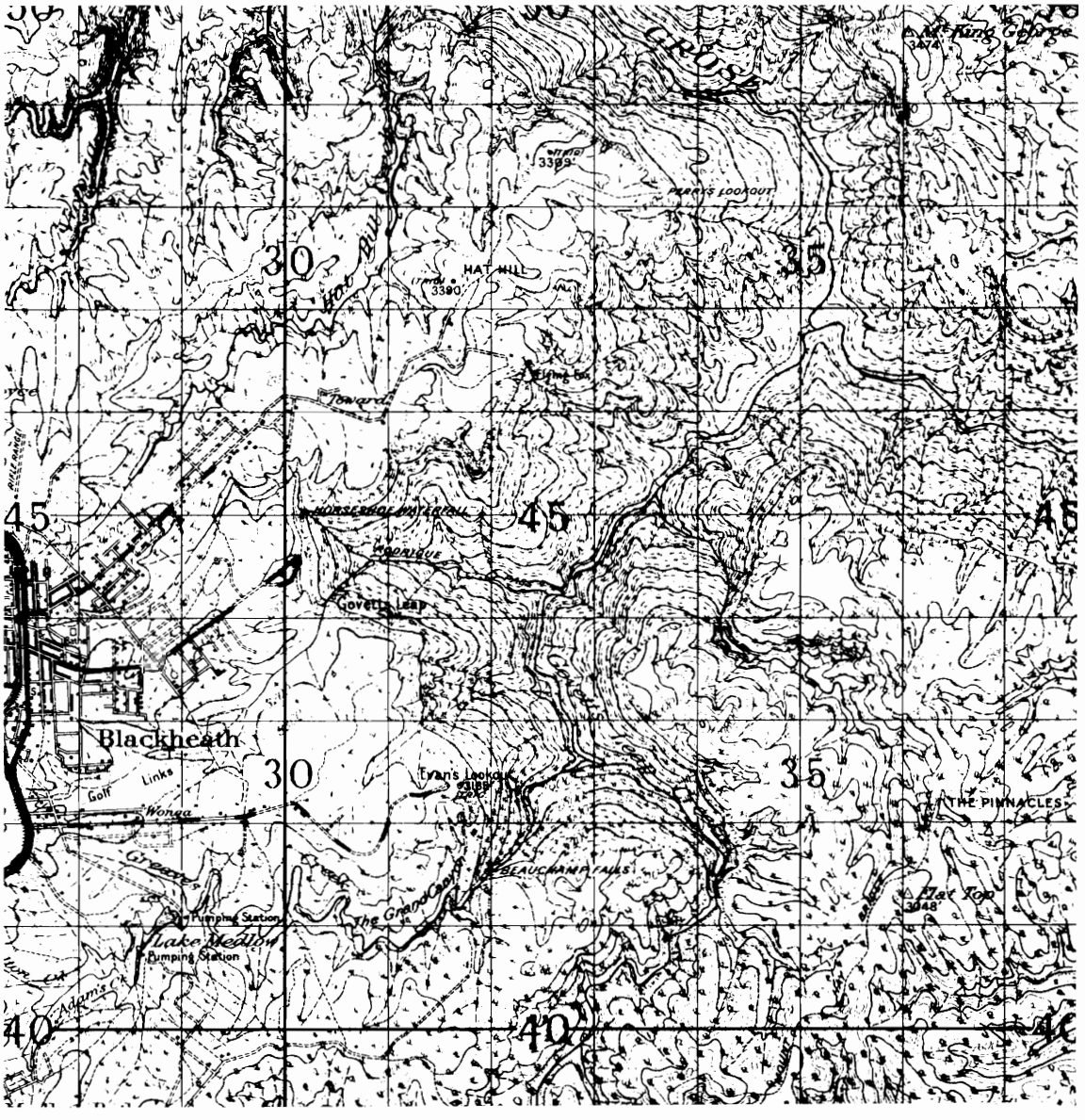
Skirt the Pinnacle on the right hand side following a small foot trail and head towards Flat Top Mountain. Within about a quarter of a mile you should come out on a fire trail road which goes out along the ridge to Mt. Hay, the big rounded hill a few miles further east. Turn right along the road, and after flanking the side of Flat Top the road dips down towards a swampy area and climbs up the opposite side of the shallow valley. When another trail comes in at the top of the next ridge, bear left and follow the road right through to Leura. On the way several side tracks will be seen, mostly coming in from your right, but the main trail is easy to distinguish and as one progresses the Blue Mountain towns can be seen on the ridge ahead. The Mt. Hay road emerges on the Highway at Leura school a quarter mile east of Leura railway station.

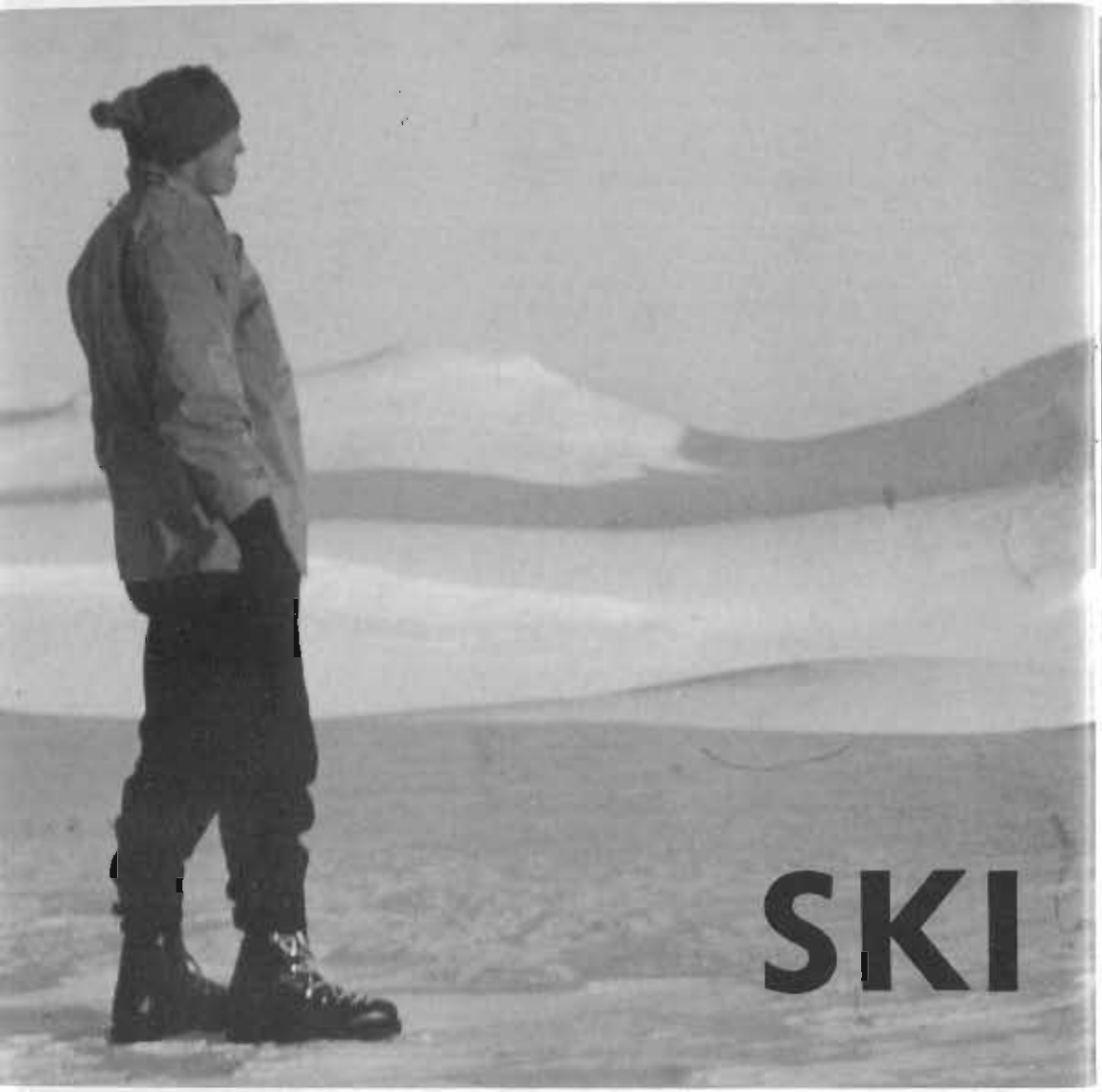
Times of journey from Blue Gum Forest:

Blue Gum Forest to Lockley's Pylon—about two hours.

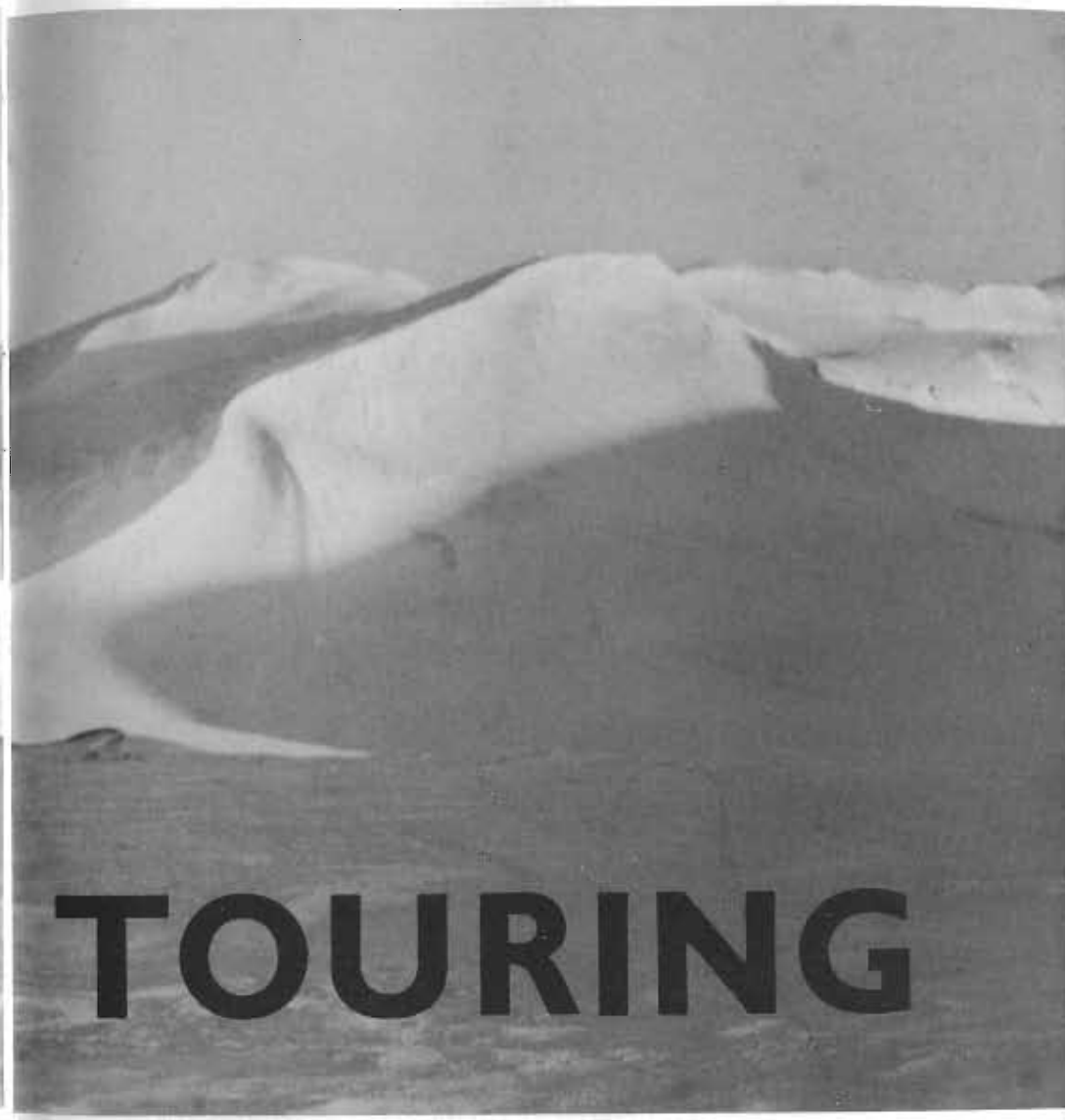
Lockley's Pylon to fire trail—about one and a half hours.

Fire trail (near Flat Top)-Leura—about two and a half hours.





SKI TOURING



By Paddy Pallin—S.B.W.

like massive sculptures of immaculate marble.

slow and wearisome. The descen

By Paddy Pallin—S.B.W.

"A man who has been through bitter experiences and travelled far can enjoy even his own suffering after a time."

— Eumaeus in the Odyssey.

Ski touring is terrific. It contains all the thrill of ski-ing with the best elements of bush-walking. The mantle of unmarked snow smooths away all minor irregularities and emphasises the grandeur of the frozen mountains. The peaks stand in stark magnificence

like massive sculptures of immaculate marble. The eye sweeps effortlessly from top to top across chaste saddles, and notes in passing the steep spurs into the valleys. When bushwalking one tends to emphasise the completion of the journey, but on skis there is always the invitation to skim down some long ridge "just for fun", to finish winded and excited right where the snow stops. Then skins must be put on to help in the slow climb back to the top of the spur. In the morning the snow crystals flash the rainbow colours of a million diamonds, and the low sun casts shadows which emphasise the superb beauty of the scene.

Yes, ski touring is terrific. The climbs are slow and wearisome. The descents are sheer delight.

Weather and distance had beaten us once before in an attempt to reach Jagungal from Mt. Nimmo. This time we had decided on a shorter route via Olivers Hut and the Burrungubugge River, with more elaborate transport arrangements to enable us to finish at Munyang Power Station.

We left Olivers Hut about 1 p.m., having planned to go along the creek almost to Kidmans Hut, then along a side creek by the usual route to the Alpine Hut. There had been a recent fall of snow and the valley was covered with a deep layer of very soft snow. There was

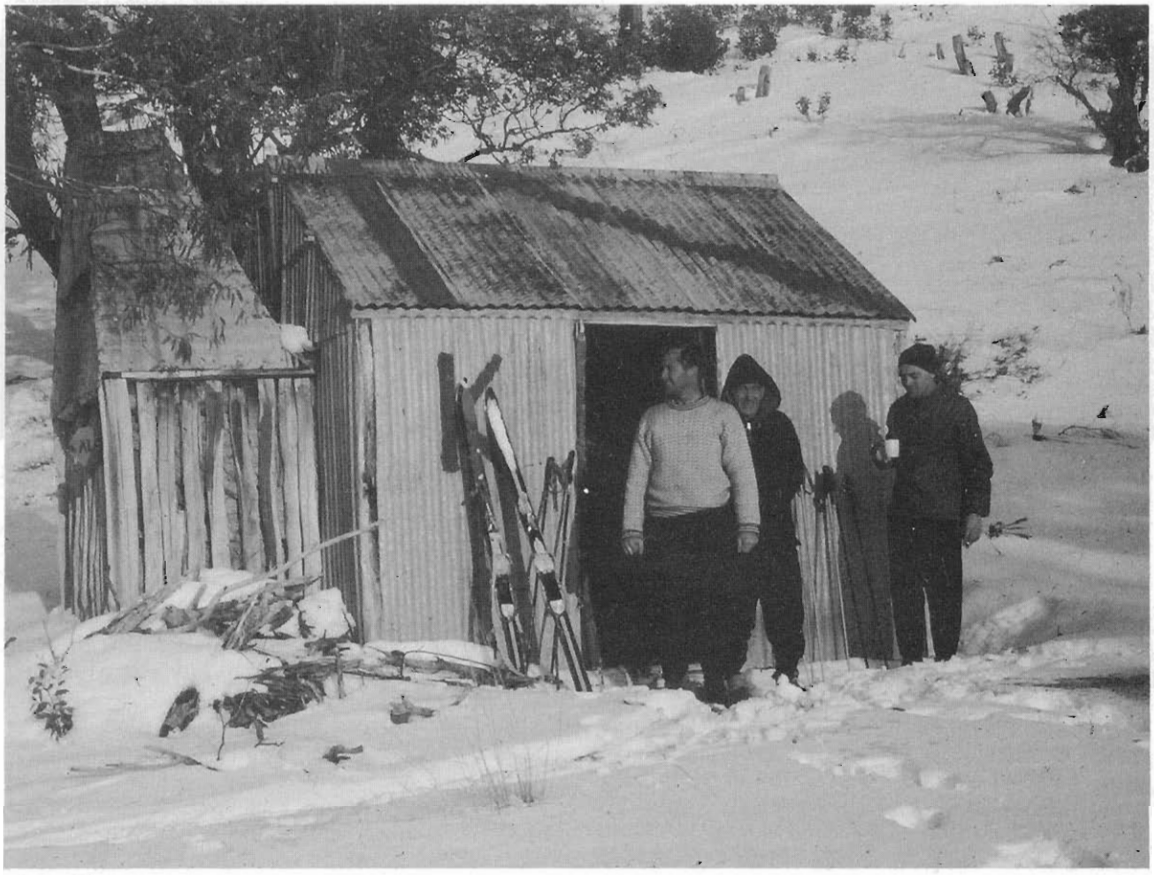
no track, so we followed likely leads through the heavy tea-tree scrub. It is quite impossible to walk through such stuff. It is only slightly less impossible to ski through. A ski tip is hooked in it. Now a tip is nearly three feet away from an ankle and the amount of force that can be exerted is almost nil. Take the weight of the ski, kick the foot back to free the tip and successfully entangle the ankle. All this flogging around on one foot ensnares that ski on the whippy tea-tree branches. One soon learnt to get only slightly mad with exasperation.

We zigzagged our way across the valley, hoping to find easier ways through, but in vain. We added a succession of small creeks and smooth boulders to our trials. The grade became steeper so we slid, unhooked and slid again with greater gusto and more velocity. We put on skins; the wear and tear on them was to cause trouble later.

All things come to an end: at four o'clock we were in clear country, but with Alpine Hut too many miles away. There was some discussion as to the exact whereabouts of Kidmans Hut, but we all agreed it was in one of several valleys which came in on the opposite side of the river. We found a spot where we could cross on skis. Next came a side creek, but this was much deeper.

Two decided to cross and risk getting wet socks. I decided to take boots and socks off and wade the icy stream. Off came pack and skis, boots and socks, all of which had to be laboriously loaded up again for the crossing. Unfortunately my ski pants were of the new fangled kind and would not come up beyond my calves. Having taken all this trouble to keep my socks dry I was in no mood to get my pants wet. When the water became too deep I had to retreat and wade through deep snow in bare feet along the river looking for a shallower spot. At last I waded thankfully over, deposited all my bundles in the snow and put on socks and boots. My feet were blue, and I was feeling thoroughly exhausted. The physi-

Kidman's Hut — a welcome shelter.



You can run till the snow runs out.

cal strain of the afternoon had been bad enough, but the mental exasperation and frustration of that scrub had really burnt up everything I had. It was with a feeling of relief that I bent down to fasten my ski so we could get out of the valley. Then to my horror one skin was missing. My mind simply refused to face the ordeal of crossing again. At that moment a lagging member of the party came into sight. He was just as fagged as I, but nobly turned round to find the missing skin a few hundred yards back. In silence we slowly dragged ourselves over the hill to the welcome shelter of Kidman's Hut.

This must surely be the smallest hut on the Range. It measures about 10ft. x 8ft., with a fireplace occupying one end. There is a double bedstead, a collection of double mattresses and an earth floor. It is grubby and dirty, but a luxurious hotel could have satisfied our wants no better that night. There was shelter from the cold, fire to cook our food and a place to lie down. The night at Kidmans and the fierce wind put an end to our hopes of getting to Jagungal, and so we decided to go straight across to White's and so to Munyang.

As soon as we began to climb in the morning the straps of my skins broke, a legacy from the tea-tree. Repairs would have been a comfortable job in the hut, and I had been a fool not to check them before we left. It was a different matter when exposed to a thirty knot wind. Jab stocks in snow, take off pack, take off mitts and slip them on stocks. Stocks blow over and mitts go sliding. Mustn't lose mitts, mustn't get frostbite, why didn't I bring blanket pin and pin them on parka. Mitts recovered, put in pocket, lay stocks down wedged under pack. What luck: sharp knife in trousers pocket: where's cord? Ah, got it. Rough repairs were soon made, but that impatient wind made fingers seem clumsy and plucked at every loose object.

We lunched at Alpine Hut and then, sheltered from the wind began the thousand foot climb to Big Brassy. When we reached the

top of the Main Range, we met the wind again in its full intensity. The range here lacks any distinctive features. We aimed to go by compass bearing to the Tin Hut, and then west from it to Schlink Pass road, which we would follow to White's River Hut. There was some disagreement as to the correct direction, but finally we all agreed and after an hour's slogging we saw the hut half buried in the snow. The wind was bitter cold and unceasing, and with the light snow, seared our faces. Everything we wore became coated with clear ice. Every loose cord was an icicle. Our skins frosted and collected a heavy pad of snow. The snow was soft and slow. So great was the effort involved in taking off and putting on skins that we finally left them on even when we had a few hundred yards downhill run. The sun no longer shone, and we trudged along silently, each thinking his own thoughts. Here was no exhilarating beauty to lure us on, no exciting prospect of dappled shadows on rounded ridge. Just a white wilderness stretching for miles in every direction under a threatening sky. Suddenly, as we neared the western edge of the range the gloom was relieved by a wonderful sight.

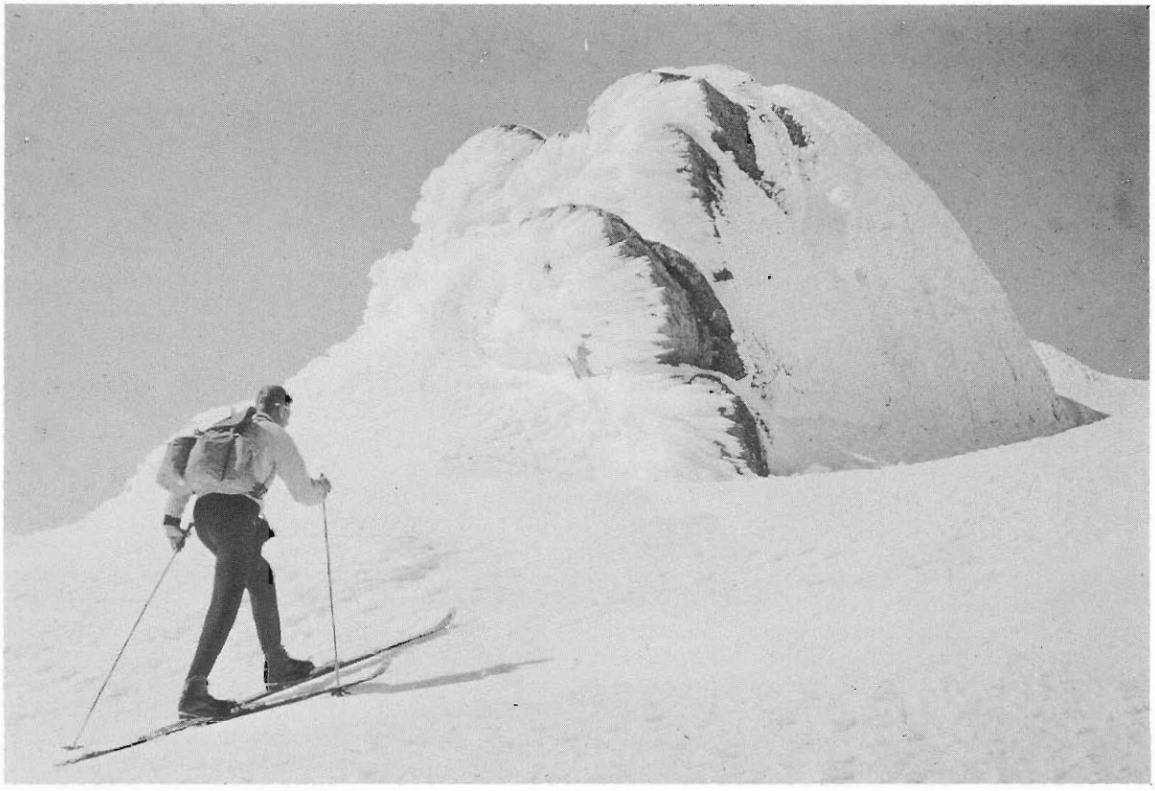
All the western ridges came into view and beyond the furthermost was a strip of clear sky below the clouds. From this came rays of the setting sun lighting the clouds with warm pink hues. To the north-west silhouetted against the pink clouds was a mountain, edges sharp-etched and a ghostly silver grey in colour. It well repaid the trudge across the range. I was separated from the others at the time and they did not notice it. I have since checked on the map and the mountain was indeed The Ghost; possibly so named from a similar sighting.

Oh grief, oh pain. I was thoroughly tired and scarcely made progress even down hill. Fall, balance upright, trudge on, fall. At White's we just sat, dried out our things, and drank hot drinks. Then someone suggested food and we set to and prepared a meal.

Tomorrow there was a little way to go.

I wouldn't like all trips to be like this, yet in retrospect, it was a good trip. As Eumaeus said: it takes a little while.

After the run down the slow climb out.



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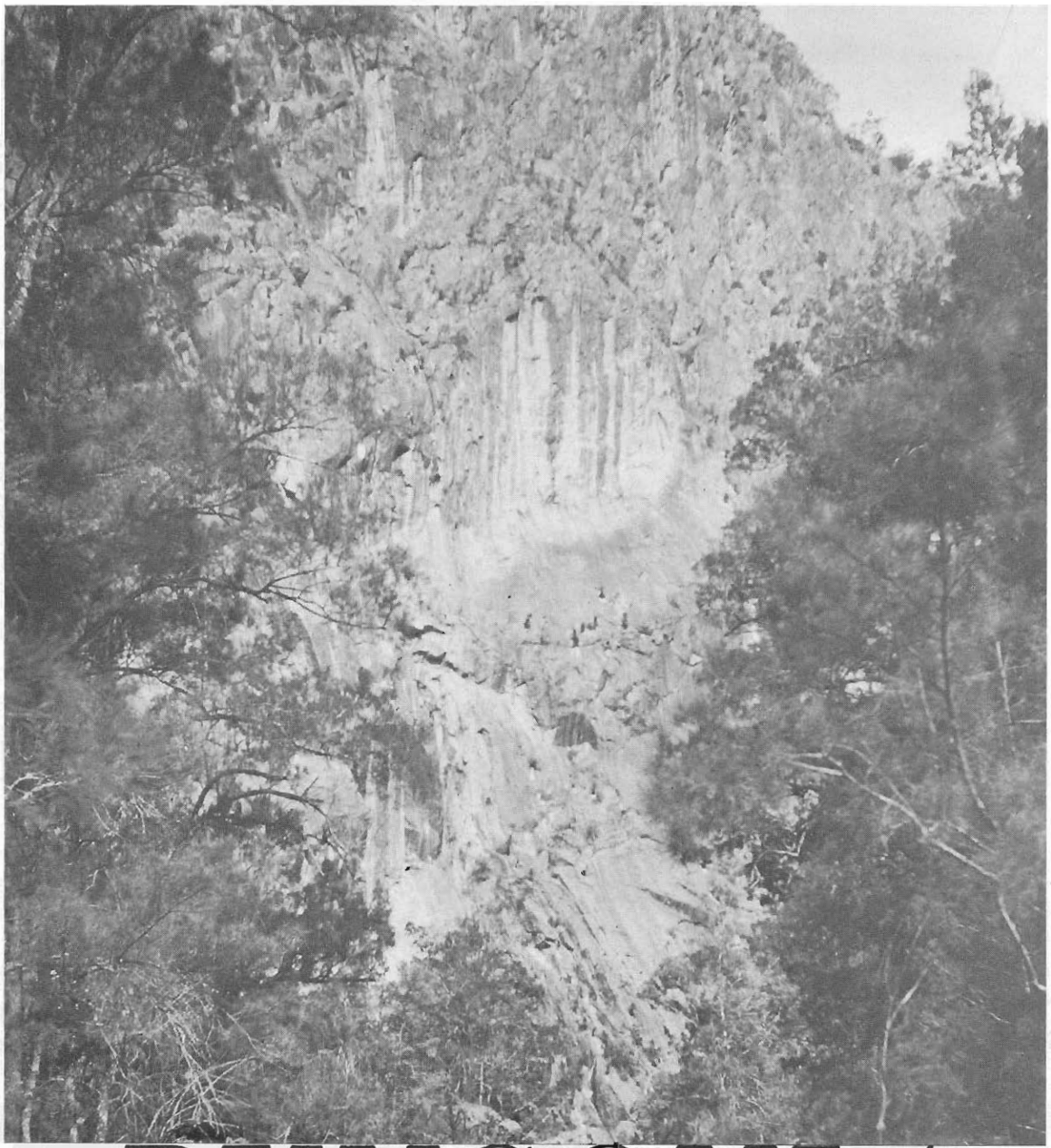


BUNGONIA

By John Davis—S.R.C.

That's it on the right. I looked at the picture projected on the wall. A very smooth sided canyon.

It looks a bit steep, doesn't it? I was watching the overhang.

It will be good practice for N.Z. though. For Rick this is sufficient excuse.

Mmm. Maybe . . . agreed to think about it. I hoped he would have enough sense to forget about it.

And yet the next Friday we were driving through the night to Bungonia Gorge. We slept in. From the bottom it looked more looming than the most inspired of photos. Though we knew perfectly well we would only climb in the direction the hand holds would let us, we did the eight o'clock in the morning routine of planning our route up the foreshortened 1,000ft. wall. The route decided, I poured good clean Shoalhaven water into the supposedly clean gallon container.

The wall in places was glass smooth and only by climbing a convenient tree could we manage the first 100ft. It looked possible that we may finish by Sunday afternoon. The next pitch was the very image of a photo we had seen of the Hinterstoisser Traverse on the Eiger. If we had brought a camera . . . just print out that grass . . .

Above us and overhanging slightly was a perfectly smooth face. There will be a ledge above it for sure. Put in a bolt and we will be up in no time. Rick was still optimistic. I looked around to try both sides, but realised I was just putting off the evil moment. In the next 120ft. we took it in turns to put in five bolts and thirteen pitons. The bolts took fifteen minutes of strenuous drilling and even then did not look too good. We had given up wearing packs by now, realising that N.Z. would be nothing like this. We spent the night tied on firmly at the base of this heartbreaking pitch. About midnight a huge boulder dropped from the look-out above. The overhang protected us, but we didn't like it.

At first light we had a bite to eat, some hydrocarbon-detergent mix, burped and set off up again. Our stiffness from the night wasn't too bad. Our hands were cause for concern. The combined effects of unusual rock hammering and rope pulling had left them very tender. By midday Sunday we were directly under a monstrous overhang. There had been none of the ledges we had expected. This was limestone country, not the Blue Mountains.

We retreated in three abseils. In two days we had made good only 300ft.

I was back again two weeks later with Bryden Allen, who also had dreams of grandeur. Rick couldn't come and wasn't too pleased about the whole thing. We were earlier this time, even though I had missed out on sleep for several nights. This is not to be recommended before a big climb. After an argument we only took six pints of water. Remembering the last time it seemed that eight would be a better ration for two of us, but "the rucksack already weighs . . ."

We reached the previous highest point in no time at all and went on past the overhang. The climbing up till then had not been easy and certainly became no easier. In fact, it soon became quite dicey. We had been climbing forty-five degrees to the left, keeping above an ever increasing overhang. We could not abseil off for we couldn't even touch the face, and we certainly were not going to climb down. There was only up.

"Funny," remarked Bryden, "I seem to be leading all the hard pitches."

Reluctantly I agreed to change turns, but the rock was one ahead of him, and again he collected every hard lead. Sometimes we knocked rocks off. They only hit once. Exposure. Mustn't sleep. Keep awake to belay Bryden.

At nightfall, after an exciting hand traverse and layback we found a niche in the wall big enough for one person at a tight squeeze, and beside it a small ledge big enough for a bivouac. Bryden had a short try at the next pitch, but the lure of sleep was too great. He took the ledge and I went into the niche.

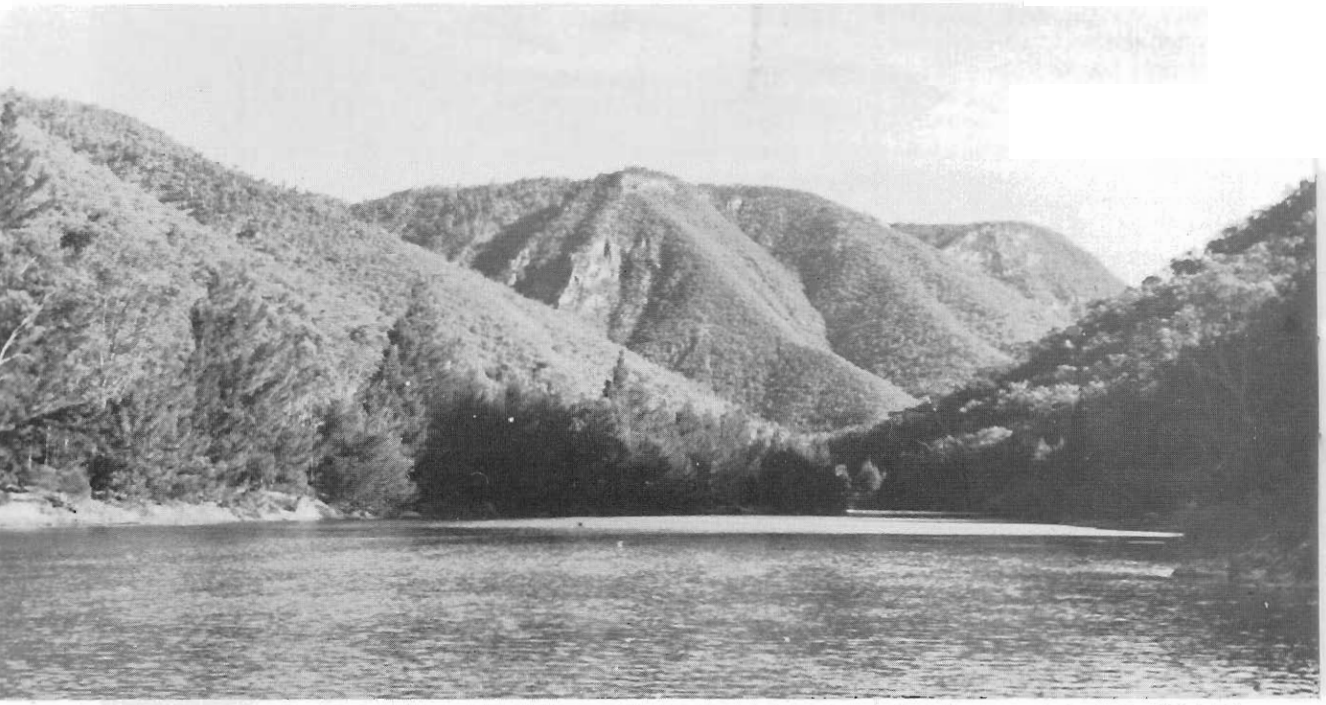
My food brought a cry of disgust from Bryden. Not that he hadn't seen a selection of baby food before. He had an assortment of dried and dehydrating things: dry biscuits, dried fruits and dry, dry, dry chocolate. We could barely speak from lack of water. Each proclamation of the contents brought a variation of the same disgusting noise, overcome, it must be said for the sake of historical truth or necessity, by a slurping sound as he dug into lambs' brains macaroni with a piton. I rescued my share of fish dinner and after egg custard could crawl back to my niche with most of Bryden's chocolate. In reply to some anxious questioning, I assured him that mine was a lousy position, and that I couldn't possibly sleep. Satisfied, he dozed off. After an hour or so of struggling my little cave was almost perfect. Using my jumper as a pillow I was soon quite comfortable. It was too hot to sleep.

We finished the climb next day having done twenty pitches of overall grade "Very Severe" We drank nine pints each of water.

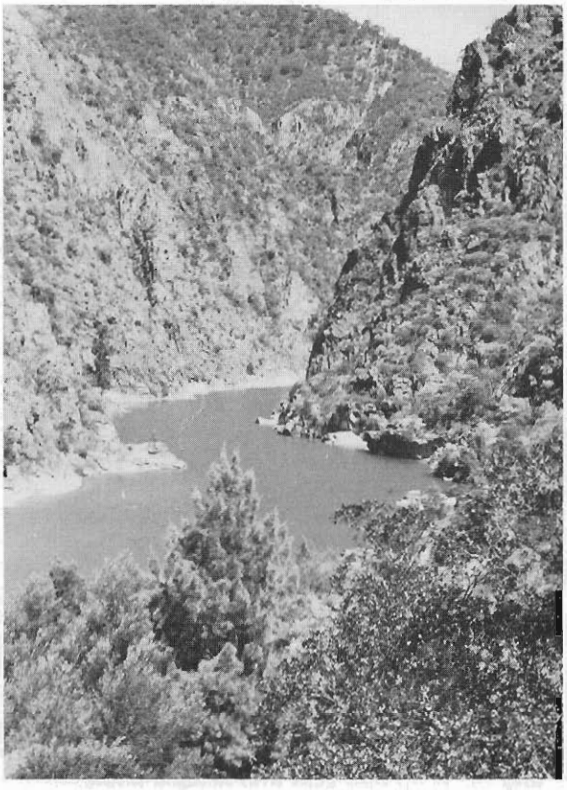
Because of his terrible estimate of our water ration Bryden grudgingly agreed to call the climb "Teiger", provided it was pronounced "teeger".

You know, I was looking at the face on the north side. Maybe we could start from . . .

He rambled on as I put the gear in the heap and the heap into gear and headed home.



THE SHOALHAVEN RIVER



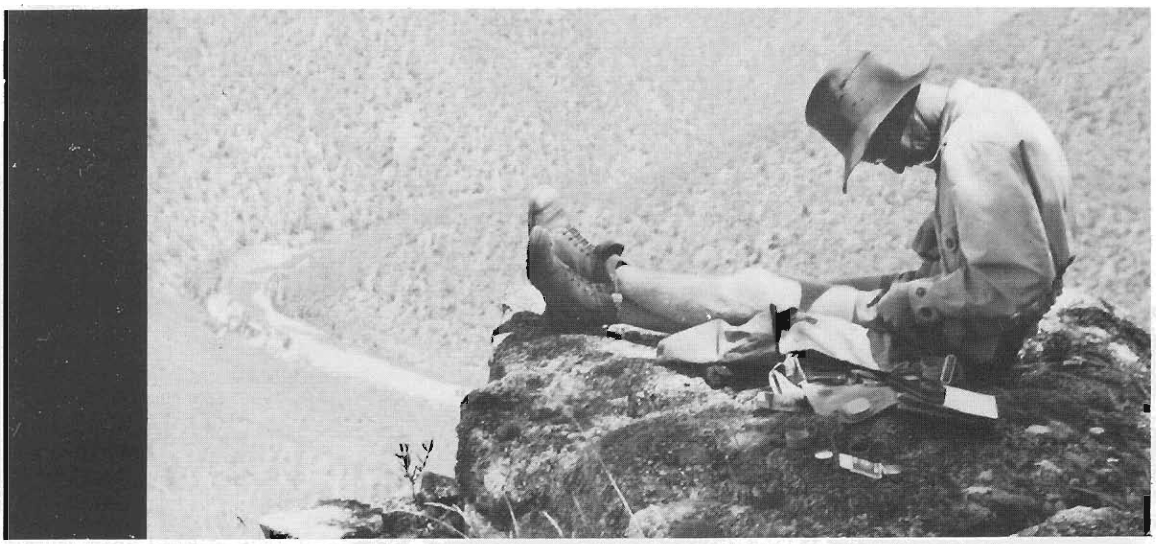
Man can live with little food and without company. He lives better with company and better still with comradeship. Without water he cannot live.

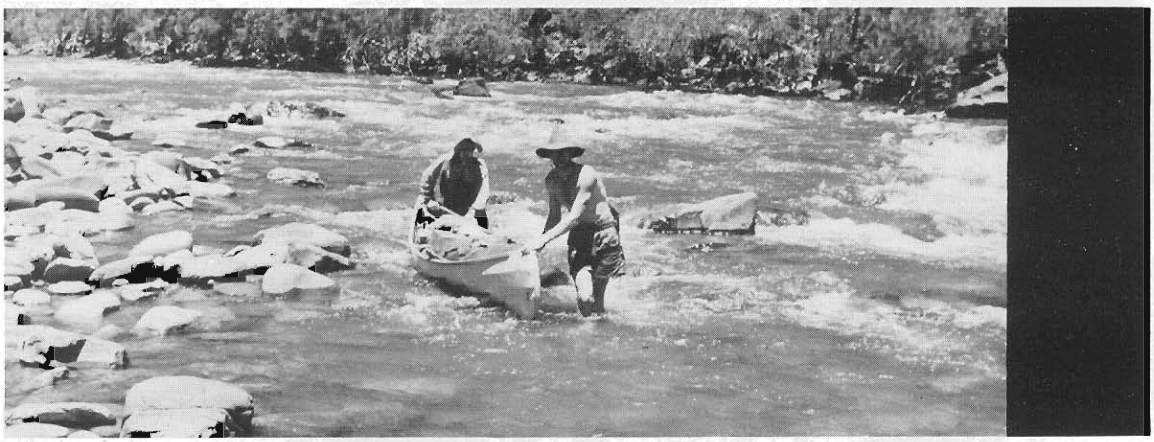
Bushwalking is very often the art of finding water: a soak high up on a mountainside; a shallow pool, lip-deep, on the Wild Dogs; or a river, clean from the snows, rushing over granite. Everyone comes as an explorer to a river and when he returns it is to that first joy of discovery. In his youth he will remember the great ridges that gave access to the rivers and their wonderful names: Misery Ridge, Black Jerry's, Hannel Spur. And the guardians of rock at which he paid homage to the rivers.

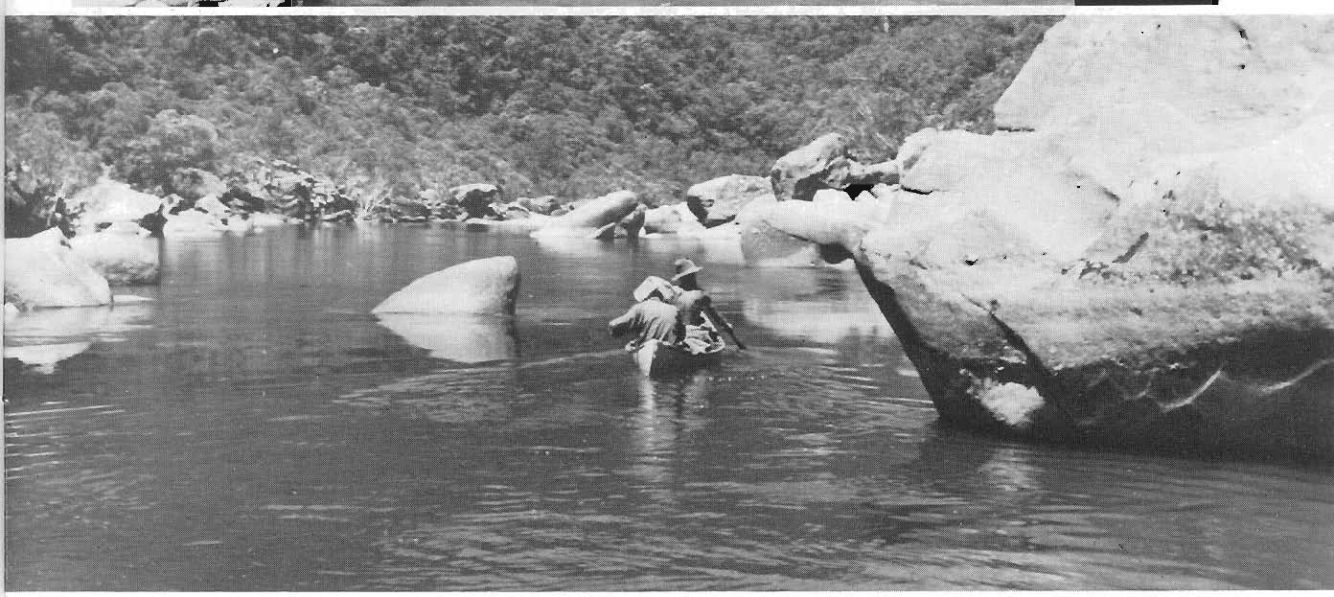
He will remember the rivers and their ridges as the key to the great country.

When he returns it will be to a pool where he once swam, to a cascade where an azure kingfisher flashed through the casuarinas, to a waterfall which lulled him to sleep at the end of a hard day.

Then he will know that it is from a river that all life stems. Life and serenity. And that these will endure.







Travels with a Vinegar Bottle

Some of the most acrimonious dialogue I have ever heard occurred during the preliminary planning for trips. Once the party had boarded the train, or in modern times, the car, the die has been cast; argument ceases with the tacit understanding that there are sufficient perils without dissension If one commences as the junior member of the party this sound and fury can be most disturbing, but in truth it signifies nothing. I would listen in trepidation to these dialogues wondering how such persons could have been accepted as "compatible", fearful of the mess that must result from four days, or a week, of being thrown together with all the pinpricks of wet camps, dry dry lunches and lost bearings to compound incipient mutiny. I watched one fellow all one Easter fearing that he might choose some unlovely cliff face to proclaim a republic and push the (Loyalist) leader off a ledge. On other trips I was watchful for the first signs of revolution, ready to throw in my lot. Such revolts never occurred and then after some years I realised all the arguments were connected with food-listing and my friends had a pathological horror of being deprived of even one meal. Being lost, tired, exhausted, was as nothing to the possible loss of a snack. Unknown ridges, fearful sallee, gross surveying optimism, duff gen held no terrors for these people. One packet less of chocolate, a doubtful quantity of rice could reduce some of them, in the club room, to a state of nervous collapse. The disposition of tinned food could

only be accomplished by taking each member aside, confidentially, and saying that someone else had two tins. If you were the unfortunate two tinner it was whispered that someone else had three.

One of the most sensible and beautiful girls I ever knew had this food trauma to a remarkable degree. After several months of contention it appeared that we were, in fact, not suited. To be sent wandering the midnight streets of Katoomba for addenda is a severe test of any blossoming romance. I did not really object to shelling peas on the train: the pods could always be thrown out the window. There was reward in eating an immense meal of the reserve tinned food after one had climbed the Dogs. I have said that this girl was sensible as well as beautiful. In a magnificent burst of sensibility she invented a mythical girl-friend who would come next week-end, certainly and definitely. This mythical girl was small and would not eat very much; she was inexperienced—could we carry the extra food for her? Certainly. When we caught the train M— was ill, she thought the trip might be too much for her; she had gone to Canberra for the week-end. We ate very well and were now regarded as sure to make a match. "They never argue —she cooks wonderful meals." When I did uncover the plot, I was eating plum pudding and brandy sauce at the time, I thought it wiser to say nothing. Many times we seduced the leader into ten minute breaks for raisin bread, buttered, chocolates, or for the glucose sweets which were always at the very bottom of my pack.

To those who are planning an extended trip involving food dumps, it seems that complications and arguments grow exponentially in the way mosquitoes breed in the warm weather. Will eggs keep for thirteen and one half days? If we assume fifty percent rottenness. All that hard tack, shouldn't we take along a mild laxative? Sugar versus sacsweet? Dampers against biscuits. (If J- cooks the damper I won't eat it. I saw him do terrible things to a damper one night.) Dried meat? Disgusting stuff. Tinned meat? We will need a packhorse at this rate. Why do you think you were invited? Lannigans Creek or Church Creek? Upstream as far as possible. Downstream as far as possible. Above the big creeks where the river doesn't rise as much. I saw it halfway up Cambage Spire last time it flooded. Oatmeal or grapenuts? Scott didn't take enough fats to the Pole. Bacon would go off in Christmas weather. Tinned butter? Tropical slime. I indicate the headings and not the seething bitterness engendered.

Eventually the food is purchased, the last drop of solder has sealed the tin, durable goods have been distributed and the cache party has caught the train to Camden. Two of the party have had a few ales, the collater is making another check of the packs and the fourth member, along with the others, is suffering a recovery from a Christmas party. Harmony is like a warm glow over the box carriage, although in a moment the acrimonious dialogue will resume. What follows, as biographers disclaim, is true but not accurate.

Val: "What's that?"

Arthur (aley and innocent): "What?"

V.: "That bottle."

A.: "Vinegar. It's on the label."

V.: "Couldn't be vinegar on the food list I gave you."

A.: "Your writing is pretty rough. What could it have been?"

Val looks viciously through the master food list. Arthur gives an aley wink to the others.

Jack (with much feeling): "I knew there would be some — trouble.

Myself: "I hope it's only needle and thread or shaving gear, if it's food I am resigning."

Val: "There's nothing remotely resembling vinegar. Have you all got your food lists?"

Three are produced. Arthur thinks he burnt his. All the food is placed on the floor, carefully segregated. The vinegar bottle rests on a sleeping bag. Each item is named, the number of letters counted and Val writes it out in her normal handwriting. Nothing resembles vinegar. Val (tearfully): "It must be something in the tin."

Arthur: "We are not opening that."

Val: "I feel it must be something terribly important."

She retires to the only place one can retire to in a box carriage. Arthur unscrews the cap of the vinegar. There is a delicious aroma of canefields, a memory of hot nights at Era and cold nights at Kossie. He has procured some legendary and pungent rum.

Arthur (aley and innocent): "We will keep the joke going a bit longer."

Val returns and sees another bottle.

Val: "What's in THAT bottle?"

Myself: "Rhinegolde."

Val: "Oh, no. What didn't you bring?"

Myself: "There might be a dry stage across Colong Swamp. A little bit extra never hurt any food list."